47 E.3.56

A PRESERVATIVE AGAINST DEISM.

SHEWING

The great Advantage of *Revelation* above *Reason*, in the Two Great Points, *Pardon of Sin*, and a *Future State of Happiness*.

BIBL. CANT. ACAD.

With an APPENDIX in Answer to a Letter of *A. W.* against Revealed Religion, in the *Oracles of Reason*.

By *NATHANAEL TATLOR*.

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THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

THE Growth of Deiſm, the Advancing of Reaſon by thoſe who have no larger a Stock of it to ſet up withal than the reſt of their Neighbours, and the Publick Defiance which has been made to Revealed Religion in the general, ſhould awaken us to ſet all hands on work to countermine the Common Enemy, who ſcorn to work any longer under the Covert §. 1.

 and

and Shelter of the Night, but in the open Day endeavour to blow up the Foundations of our Faith. I have little Hopes of the Recovery of thoſe who are ſo very far gone in Infidelity, that they have nothing of the *Chriſtian* left them, but what is in one of their *Names*; However ſomewhat may and ought to be done, to preſerve thoſe who are not yet infected, and reſtore them who are not too deeply tainted.

The Poyſon has been recommended to the World by the alluring Name of *the Oracles of Reaſon*; And there can be no doubt, unleſs it be, becauſe of the *Weakneſs* and *Folly* of them, *by whom*, they who have vented them, were inſpired: But the Devil cannot always ſpeak through the *Serpent*; ſometimes he muſt make uſe of a *duller Animal*, the beſt he can get. Thin Cobwebs indeed they are, which theſe venomous Creatures do weave;

weave; but yet they have been ſtrong enough to hold ſome little *Inſects*, corrupting firſt the Minds, and then the Manners, of them that are raw, unskilful, and unſetled. Too many Proſelytes they have gotten, ſuch as they are; And tho' ſome of them evidently do not underſtand the Infidel Cavils and Objections they have read; yet they will in Diſcourſe be *hammering* at them, and repeat ſomewhat of them, like an *Eccho* in an empty and a hollow Place, which reverberates the laſt Words that were ſpoken; tho' in ſuch a broken imperfect manner, that there is no Senſe to be made of them.

'Tis true indeed, ſerious *Piety* is §. II.
the beſt Defence againſt theſe Helliſh Doctrines. Wicked Men do greedily catch at every little Cavil againſt the Scriptures, becauſe it is their Intereſt to have them run down; The

Word of God is againſt *them*, and therefore they are againſt *it*: If the Bible be true, they muſt either forſake their Luſts, or be Eternally damned for them; and they cannot bear the Thoughts either of the one or the other. But a Pious Man is freed from this Snare and Temptation; and beſides that, he has *the*
1 Joh. 5. 10. *Witneſs within himſelf*; he need but conſult the bleſſed Change that has been made by the Holy Scriptures, in order to his Eſtabliſhment in Chriſtianity. When the *Jews* reviled Chriſt as an Impoſtor, he who had been Blind, anſwered like one, the Eyes of whoſe Underſtanding were opened, as well as thoſe of his Body:
Joh. 9. 30. *Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine Eyes.* 'Tis altogether Unaccountable for a Man to give way to Doubts and Fears, whether that Doctrine be from Heaven, which

which he finds has fitted his Soul for it.

Many Good Meen indeed do unwarily ſuck in ſome untoward Principles, when a little gilded over, which in their Nature tend to ungodly Practices. But through the Weakneſs of their Heads they don't diſcern the Evil Nature, or Direct Tendency of them: and through the Honeſty of their Hearts they do not follow whither they would naturally lead 'em. The *Grace* of God within ſerves inſtead of the Gift of *Miracles*: And what our Saviour promis'd his Diſciples as an Extraordinary Favour in the Primitive Times, *they ſhall take up Serpents; and if they drink any Deadly thing, it ſhall not hurt them*, hath been in ſome meaſure daily verified in all ſucceeding Ages. The Excellency of their Conſtitution throws off the Poyſon they have heedleſsly taken down; and tho' they receive Mr. 16. 8.

ſome Miſchief, yet the *killing* Influence of it is ſtrangely prevented by that Sovereign Antidote which they have within 'em.

And the ſame Good Principle produces a rooted *Antipathy* in them againſt *Fundamental Errors* and *Damnable Hereſies*. All Creatures, Plants as well as Animals, have a natural Inſtinct, whereby they draw to them what is proper for their Preſervation, Growth, and Nouriſhment; but avoid that which is deſtructive to them. The New Creature, the moſt Excellent of all, is not worſe provided for, than every inferior Being. An enlightened Chriſtian has a *ſupernatural Inſtinct*, which makes him turn aſide from Damnable Errors, and unmovably retain the great Truths of the Goſpel, with a mighty Reliſh and Savour. And this is that which holds the Generality of Chriſtians cloſe to, and keeps them faſt in the Faith,

Faith, when Deceivers do abound, more than mere *dry Reaſon* and Strength of Argument can poſſibly do. It cannot reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that all Holy Men ſhould be able to Anſwer all thoſe Cavils, that may be ſtarted by ſubtile Hereticks, or learned Infidels, againſt our Holy Religion; eſpecially conſidering, there are not among them *many Learned*, many of the *Diſputers of this World*: But God *hides theſe things from the Wiſe and Prudent, and reveals them unto Babes; even ſo, O Father, for ſo it ſeemeth good in thy Sight.* Luke 10. 21.

They went out from us, ſays the Apoſtle, *but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, no doubt but they would have continued with us.* 1 John 2. 19. But will ſincere Chriſtians follow them? No, that cannot be: For the Apoſtle adds, *Ye have an Unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things; and the ſame anointing teacheth you of all* v. 20.

things,

things, and is truth, and is no lie:
Ver. 27. *And even as it hath taught you, ye ſhall abide in him.* And therefore *Anointing* and *Eſtabliſhing* go both together, *He that eſtabliſheth us with you in Chriſt, and hath anointed us, is God.*
2 Cor. 1. 21.
And

§. III. As the whole Syſtem of Divine Graces is an excellent Preſervative, ſo is that particular Grace of *Humility* in an eminent Manner. They who are humble (and he who knows himſelf, will be ſo) will never offer at ſetting up their own ſhort Underſtandings as the Meaſure and Standard of Truth. There are Myſteries in Art, in Nature, in Philoſophy, in Natural Religion; no wonder then there are ſo in Revealed Religion, and the Holy Scriptures. Two things there are, that make it neceſſary that there ſhould be deep things in *them*, to us unſearchable

and

and paſt our finding out. They treat of the Nature, Counſels, and Acts of God, which are laid down as the neceſſary Foundations of Practical Holineſs; and We are poor ſhort-ſighted Creatures; as ſoon may a Man contain the whole Ocean in the Hollow of his Hand, as We comprehend an Infinite Being, and his Wiſe Counſels and Decrees. That there are Myſteries in Chriſtianity, inſtead of being a Stone of Stumbling, and a Prejudice againſt our Faith, ſhould rather be a Confirmation of it to us, and an Argument for it; it looks more like a Divine Revelation, when ſome Parts of it are very Profound and Abſtruſe. Revealed Religion, like a Picture, muſt have its dark Shades, as well as its brighter Colours. As to its Practical Part, it is, and ought to be, clear: But the Articles that are to be believed, muſt of neceſſity be Obſcure; I ſhoud

expect

expect that the Foundation of ſo great a Building ſhould be laid *under Ground*, and out of Sight. And a humble Perſon will quickly be convinced, that it is his Duty to bow down his Head before Divine Revelation, as well as ſubmit his Will to the Divine Command; and that a Creature muſt yield Subjection to his Maker with his whole Man, and every Part thereof. But yet

§. IV. It is a good thing, that the Head be filled with *Knowledge*, that we may be able to give a Reaſonable Anſwer to them who do ask an Account of our Faith and Hope. And in a time when the Road is full of Thieves, whoſe Deſign it is to Rob and Murder us, no Man ſhould Travel without a *Sword* by his Side; and every Man ſhould get ſome skill to manage his Weapon, that he may at leaſt defend himſelf, and

that

that Sacred Treaſure which is, or ought to be, dearer to him than his Life. I will therefore briefly mention ſome of thoſe *Rational Grounds*, upon which our Aſſent to the Chriſtian Doctrine ought to be built, and then it will remain firm and unſhaken. They may be reduced to theſe two Heads; The Nature of Chriſtianity; And the Divine Proof of it.

I. For the *Nature* of Chriſtianity, 'tis a Religion every way *Worthy of God.* For it gives us ſuch an Account of the Nature and Will of God, as our Reaſon with great Toil poſſibly might have found out, and cannot but approve and cloſe withal as ſoon as ever it is propoſed to us. 'Tis a great Advantage to have this Food brought to our Hands, and not to be obliged to *hunt* after it; for that at the beſt would have coſt us great Labour, and we might have miſſed

of

of it. And theſe it acquaints us with, not to amuſe and entertain us with ſubtile and uſeleſs Speculations, but as a neceſſary Foundation for the promoting and encouraging our living *Righteouſly, Soberly, and Godly, in this preſent Evil World*, which is the Apparent Deſign of the Goſpel. And in requiring *Godlineſs*, as well as Righteouſneſs and Sobriety, it does vaſtly exceed all the Inſtructions that we can learn from any of the Heathen Philoſophers. They have indeed, the Second Table written in their Books pretty fairly, tho' not without ſome Blots and *Errata*'s: But as for the Firſt Table, they have but a few broken Letters of the Duties of it, and theſe too in a very ſmall Character. The Goſpel mightily inſiſts upon, and preſſes the neceſſity of *Loving God* with our whole Hearts and Souls, of making his *Glory* our Chief End in all that we do:

do: Doctrines that lie at the Foundation of Practical Holineſs; which yet the Heathen Philoſophers never mentioned, nor dream'd of: And one may as ſoon expect to find a *Jewel* by raking in a *Dunghil*, as to meet with any Paſſages of this Nature in any of their Writings.

Again, 'tis a Religion every way *ſuited to the State of Fallen Man*: For it plainly acquaints us, That we are in a State of Apoſtacy, and how this came about. And it would greatly endear the Holy Scriptures to Men, if they did but Diſtinctly know what a perplexing Inquiry this has been among the greateſt Wits, and the moſt learned Scholars, who have not had the Word of God for their Guide; * *how Sin and Miſery came to break into this World.* Some attributed it to Diſcord and Antipa-

* *Stillingfleet's* Orig. Sacræ, p. 491.

thy,

thy, a certain quarrelſome, pernicious, bloody Principle, which they knew not what to make of; but this is to put us off with mere Words and Sounds. Others, to the neceſſary Perverſity of Matter. Others, to ſome very malignant Spirit, that had ſlily wound it ſelf into it. Others, to *two Gods*, a Good, and a Bad one: And tho' it is impoſſible that more Nonſence and Contradiction ſhould be crowded together in the narrow Compaſs of ſo few Words, *Two Gods, whereof one a wicked, ſpiteful, and malicious One*: Yet *Plutarch* tells us, This was *the moſt Ancient Opinion, and moſt Univerſally received among the Wiſeſt of the Heathen.* And † one of theſe *Heads of Braſs*, that pretends to utter *Oracles of Reaſon*, is of the ſame Mind: For, ſays he, *as to the Origine of Good and Evil, methinks it is leſs Contradictory and Unreaſonable, to*

† *Oracles of Reaſon*, p. 194.

believe

believe as the Ancient Perſians *did, That there were TWO Beginnings of things, the one Good, the other Evil: For how can Evil proceed from a Being infinitely good, and without whom nothing is, if Evil be not? And if Dr.* Burnet * *have proved* Geneſis *but a Parable, why may not the* Perſians *be as much in the right, as the* Jews? And yet another of his Brethren tells us †, That this is the firſt Head of the Deiſts Natural Religion; That there is *ONE* Infinite, Eternal God, Creator of all things. And in another place, That *the generally acknowledged Lapſe of Nature, and how it came, may be diſcovered by Natural Reaſon; and it is reaſonable to conclude without Revelation, that it came* (not from a wicked God, but) *by a Deviation from the right Rule of Reaſon implanted in us*, &c. When two

* Page 207.

† Page 197.

Deities butt and knock againſt each other, 'tis no wonder that theſe two *Authors* do the ſame. Only there is this unhappy Difference, that of the *Two Gods*, one is a *very Good* one, which makes ſome Amends for the other who is ſo *very Bad*. But *both* theſe Epiſtlers are of the ſame vile Stamp and Strain. Further, the Scripture gives us a diſtinct Account of the State of the Quarrel between God and us; what the Iſſue of it will be, if the Controverſy be not taken up; and how we may be reconciled to him, whom we can never ſucceſsfully oppoſe; tells us of a Mediator, altogether ſuch a one as Fallen Man ſtands in Need of; what God requires of us, that through him we may eſcape that Wrath and Vengeance that is due to us for Sin; and what we ſhall receive from him in a way of Reward and Puniſhment, according as we comply with his Terms, or refuſe ſo to do.

do. And it very much preſſes the great Doctrine of *Regeneration*; a moſt God-like Doctrine, every way worthy of God, and neceſſary for us becauſe of the Corruption of Human Nature: And withal ſhews whither we ſhould apply our ſelves for Divine Grace, for the changing the habitual Frame of our Souls, and the amending of our Lives. So much for the *Nature* of Chriſtianity.

II. Now for the *Proof* of it. The *Word began firſt to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God alſo bearing them witneſs, both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his own Will.* Heb. 2. 4. And he would never have ſet the Broad Seal of Heaven upon it, if it had been a Cheat, and an Impoſture, and ſo have unavoidably led us into a moſt fatal Error.

To this may be added, the wonderful *Spreading* of the Goſpel; which is very Admirable, conſidering the Strictneſs of its Precepts; the Weakneſs of the Inſtruments by whom it was propagated; the ſtrong Oppoſition that was made againſt it every where by Men in Authority, and thoſe of the greateſt Wit and Learning; the general Prejudices with which the Minds of Men were filled againſt it; and its overturning all other Religions wherein Men had been Bred and Born; and which therefore they uſe to be very tenacious of. If it had been a *Lye*, it would never have been ſo bleſſed and proſpered of God.

Conſider further, what a wonderful *Reformation* it wrought in the Hearts and Lives of all that entertained it. Surely that Seal could be no Forgery, but muſt be cut by a Divine Hand, which made ſo many

Divine

Divine Impreſſions upon ſuch Multitudes of Souls.

To all which may further be added, The Caſe of the *Jews*, who, tho' ſcattered all the World over; yet, contrary to all other Inſtances in Nature, do not mingle and incorporate with any People, but keep themſelves as a Body diſtinct from all the Nations among whom they dwell. And they are the Filth and Offſcouring of every Place, even among the Heathens, as well as the Chriſtians. The very *Mahometans* deſpiſe them: The *Indians* * have a very Emphatical way, in their Language, of calling a Man *two or three* very ugly Names in *one Compound Word*; yet that of calling a Man a *Jew*, is reckoned worſe than all the Terms of Reproach heaped up together. They are every where ſtanding Monuments

* Terry's *Voyage into the* Eaſt-Indies.

of Divine Vengeance, for rejecting the Goſpel; and a laſting Proof and Teſtimony of the Truth of our Saviour's Prophecies againſt them. Eſpecially if we conſider the many Attempts which they have made, but always in vain; but more eſpecially their laſt, in the Reign, and by the zealous Encouragement of *Julian* the Apoſtate Emperor, to rebuild the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, on purpoſe to prove our Saviour a Falſe Prophet; and the miraculous Overthrow of *it*, and his Deſign, by Balls of Fire from Heaven, whereby the Workmen were conſumed, and the ſorry Remains of the Foundations of that Temple were entirely razed, and he made further to *fulfil* the Prophecy of Chriſt by his very attempt to overthrow it; which is teſtified, not only by the *Chriſtian* Authors, but by the *Heathen* Hiſtorian * alſo.

* Ammianus Marcel. l. 23.

Neither

Neither are the *Prophecies* in Scripture concering Chriſt to be forgotten: ſuch as that of *Daniel* concerning the *Meſſiah's* being *cut off* within ſuch a compaſs of Years; which tho' it hath its leſſer Difficulties, yet as to the *main Subſtance* is very plain; and therefore *Porphyry* moſt unreaſonably pretended the Book of *Daniel* was a *Hiſtory forged* after the Events came to paſs. And that Prophecy of Chriſt's coming before the Deſtruction of the Second Temple. But above all, that which was one great Occaſion of the Converſion of that Noble * Man, who was once as remarkable for his Debauchery and Infidelity, as ever he was for his Wit or Quality, *viz.* the *Prophecy of Iſaiah* in his 53d Chapter, concerning the Death of Chriſt, which does ſo exactly correſpond with the Hiſtory of

Chap. 9. 24.

Mal. 3.

* *Earl of* Roch. *Life, by* Burnet, p. 140, 141, 142.

our Saviour's Paſſion, tho' it was wrote many Ages before Chriſt's Appearance in the World; and which the *Jews*, who abhor the Notion of a Crucified *Meſſiah*, and conſtantly Blaſpheme our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſtill kept in their Hands as a Book Divinely inſpired. *Pilate* writ an Inſcription on the Croſs, over the Head of Chriſt, *This is the King of the* Jews, in *Latin*, *Greek*, and *Hebrew* Characters. Every *Jew* is a Pillar of Braſs, which God has ſet up, and whereon he has engraven in Capital Letters, That *Chriſt was a Teacher that came down from Heaven*: And this not in two or three, but in all *Languages* under the Heavens: And he who hath Eyes to ſee, will read; and he that hath an Ear to hear, let him underſtand.

And I think we ought not to ſlight the *Acts of Pilate* which he ſent to *Tiberius*, containing a *Narrative* of the Life,

Life, Miracles, Death, and Reſurrection of our Saviour. Theſe are mentioned, not only by * *Euſebius*, but alſo by *Tertullian* † and *J. Martyr* ||, who both of them more than once in their *Apologies* for the Chriſtians, boldly appeal to 'em. And they muſt have been *Mad-men*, in ſo doing, if they had not been well aſſured of the Truth of 'em. And one can't but think it highly rational that *Pilate* ſhould ſend ſome Account of ſo Extraordinary an Affair to the Emperor. But that which to me is of great Weight, and which I am ſurprized to find omitted by Learned Men, yea by thoſe who have written warmly againſt them that have endeavoured to put a Slur on theſe *Acts*, is this, That *Maximinus* in his Perſecution cauſed *Suppoſi-*

* Hiſt. Eccl. l. 2. c. 2.
† Apol. c. 5. & c. 21.
|| Apol. 2da. p. 76. & 84. Edit. Paris.

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titious * *Acts* of *Pilate* to be Forged, full of *Blaſphemy* againſt Chriſt, which he made to be ſpread throughout the whole Empire, to be taught in the Schools, where the Boys were to get them by heart, and to declaim upon them, that our Saviour and his Religion and Followers might be everywhere derided. But Providence put an End to his Mirth and Laughter; for Divine Vengeance ſeiz'd him, and he died a wretched tormenting Death; and juſt before it, publiſh'd an Edict in Favour of the Chriſtians. Now if there had been no *Real Acts* of *Pilate*, what need was there of theſe *Counterfeit* ones, and of all this Induſtry for the ſpreading of 'em?

§. V. Of all theſe Heads of Diſcourſe, I have choſen to inſiſt only on theſe

* *Of which ſee* Euſebius Hiſt. Eccl. l. 1. c. 9. l. 9. c. 5. & c. 7.

two,

two, *viz.* The *Pardon of Sin*, and a *Future State* of *Happineſs*: becauſe, tho' they have been very lightly touched upon by ſeveral, yet I do not know any that hath thoroughly handled 'em. This *Vein* hath been ſcarce open'd, and then hath been preſently cloſed again: the Skilful Work-men having choſen rather to dig in ſome other Parts of the *Mine*; thinking, it may be, that this might be wrought by the meaner Hand of any Common Labourer; which hath encourag'd me to make the following Eſſay.

In the *firſt Chapter* whereof, I have been obliged to encounter ſome very Learned Men, two of which are Deceas'd. I have carried it with a becoming Deference to the *Authors*, while I have endeavour'd to Confute their Arguments and Errors. 'Tis great Barbarity rudely to treat the Aſhes of ſuch Men when Dead. I have therefore

fore walked *ſoftly* over their Graves, and not trampled indecently upon them.

In the *ſecond Chapter*, my Subject hath led me to Cite ſeveral of the Ancient Heathen Philoſophers, tho' I have been far from producing all that I could have brought. I have done as our Courts are wont to do when a *Jury* is Summon'd; I have *Impannell'd* as many as I thought neceſſary to *ſerve* my Purpoſe, and have diſmiſs'd the Supernumeraries.

Some of the Quotations I have tranſcrib'd at large out of the Original, that the Learned Reader may judge whether I have miſtaken the true Senſe of my Authors, or dealt worſe by them. I deſire no Man to take them, as Traders ſometimes do a Bag of Money, *upon Content*, with a Promiſe of *making them Good*; he who Examines 'em, will *find* them ſo. And that any one who hath an

Ability

Ability and a Mind to it, may do it with the greater Eaſe and Readineſs; generally the firſt Time that I quote an Author, I mention the Particular Page and Edition which I have all along made uſe of, where it was Neceſſary. The Neglect of which, in many Writers, is as idle, as if a Man ſhould direct a Letter to his Friend in *London*, without naming the *Street*, or the *Sign* of the Houſe where he dwells; who thereupon is not to be found without the Expence of much Labour and Time.

In the rendring of them into Engliſh, I have endeavour'd to give their true Senſe, without ſlaviſhly Confining my ſelf to a *Verbal* Tranſlation. I hate and deſpiſe the Superſtition of ſome Modern Publiſhers of Books, who can't clap in a *the* or an *of*, tho' it be abſolutely neceſſary to make their Authors intelligible, without giving the Reader a very formal No-

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tice of it by a *turn'd-up Comma*, the Solemnity of an *Italick Character*, and introducing the little Particle with a *Star* prefixed in the Book, as one ſometimes appears in the *Heavens* to Uſher in the Birth of a Young Prince.

In ſome Places I have endeavour'd to give ſomewhat of a *pleaſant Turn* to a few of their Expreſſions; without which, the Reading many Quotations is a *dull* Buſineſs; tho' I know by Experience 'tis a much *duller* one to gather and tranſcribe 'em. When there is no *Air* nor *Briskneſs* in the Face, the Limner will give a Stroke of his *Kindneſs*, as well as of his Pencil; unleſs he be as *heavy* a Creature as the Man that *ſits*, or have as little *Life and Soul* in him as the Picture he draws.

If any think I have been either too Light, or too Severe in a Reflection or two on the Sentiments and Speeches of

of ſome of the Old Philoſophers: I reply, I have but followed the Example of *Elijah*, who derided the Prophets of *Baal*, that were as Senſeleſs and Empty Tools as the Idol they Worſhipp'd. And I think that a Silly Opinion, or a Ridiculous Saying, deſerves no Veneration, becauſe it hath been an *Ancient* one; or came from a Man, who as many Years as he lived before me, yet it may be was not much Older when he vented it, than I now am, when I ſmile at it and him. Had I been by when the *Gibeonites* produced *their Dry and Mouldy Bread*, I would not have taſted it; Their *Broken Bottles, Clouted Shooes, and Tatter'd Garments*, for all their ſeeming *Antiquity*, ſhould never have been laid up among my Rarities: And if their Ambaſſadors, tho' doubtleſs they were Men of Figure and Quality, ſhould have endeavoured to have impoſed them on me, I'de have preſently

ſently hurl'd 'em all away, and thrown 'em on the Dunghil; whence he that had a mind to have fed on, uſed and worn them, might have pick'd 'em up, if he had pleaſed.

I have added an *Appendix*, wherein I have endeavoured to Vindicate *Revealed Religion* from the Exceptions of Mr. *A. W.* contained in a * Letter of his, which I find in the *Rhapſody* of the late unhappy Mr. *Blount*. When he ſhews more Reſpect to our Bleſſed Saviour and his Holy Religion, I ſhall do the ſame by him. I have not ſaid all that I could, but I hope I have ſaid ſo much as Effectually to Silence that *Heathen Oracle*.

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* *Oracles of Reaſon*, p. 197.

ERRATA.

PAg. 36. l. antep. r. *Homines*. p. 39. l. 18. dele *that*. p. 132. l. 10. dele *Man*. p. 179. l. ult. r. *c. 1.* p. 228. l. 14. r. *careleſsly*.

THE

THE

PREFACE.

THOUGH refined and inquiſitive Men have aimed at a perfect Comprehenſion of All things; yet the Experience of every Age doth convince us, that the Author of Nature hath ſet Bounds to our Knowledge as well as our Beings; There is a certain Meaſure of Underſtanding as well as of bodily Stature which we can-

not exceed; and though in both there is a mighty difference, yet there are many Points which are too high for us, and above the reach of the moſt Elevated Minds. There's none of them, but what an Ingenious Man would be glad to have cleared up; but yet moſt of them are of a Speculative Nature, the Knowledge whereof would be of very little Uſe and Service, and therefore we may ſafely ſit down in a quiet and contented Ignorance. There is an Obſcurity on the Face of Light; *and though it manifeſts all other Objects; yet its* Self *is in a great meaſure hidden from us. But were we*

perfect

perfect Maſters of the Philoſophy of it, whether it be a Subſtance or an Accident, Fire, or the Preſſure of the moſt ſubtil Matter, how it ſo ſwiftly ſpreads, and ſtrikes our Eyes, it would be no help to the Traveller in his Way, or the Labouring Man for the quicker diſpatch of his Work.

Did a Man throughly underſtand the Cauſe of the Ebbing *and* Flowing of the Sea, *and could he demonſtrate it to proceed from the Motion either of the Sun or Earth, or the Preſſure of the Moon; could he* dive *as deep into that Secret as ſome do into the vaſt Ocean, he*

would not enrich himſelf by the one as Men do by the other. Could the Mariner reaſon ever ſo exactly about the Nature of the Wind, *open the ſecret Treaſures whence it comes, and point out the inviſible Places whither it retreats, and aſſign the Natural Cauſes of its giddy and uncertain Motions; he could not gather it in his Sails with greater Advantage, nor the ſooner reach his deſired Haven.*

But there are ſome Points of another Nature, the Ignorance whereof will unavoidably create great Perplexity of Mind in any Conſidering Man. Of theſe

theſe I ſhall pitch upon Two, which are of Common Concern to all, and of the greateſt Importance of any that can be mentioned, viz. *The* Pardon of Sin *while we are in this World, and our* Future State *when we leave it, and paſs into the next. And in treating on both of them, I ſhall compare* Reaſon *and* Revelation, *ſet one againſt the other; and endeavour to demonſtrate, againſt the Deiſts of the preſent Age, That if we have no other Guide than the Former, we muſt needs be at a dreadful Loſs, and remain covered with the* Shadow of Death; *but if we follow the* Pſal. 44. 19.

Later, we shall have such a clear and satisfactory Account of both of them, as will be comfortable as the Light of Life *unto our Souls.*

John 8. 12.

A PRESERVATIVE AGAINST DEISM.

CHAP. I.

Of Pardon of Sin.

WHenever we are Serious and Retired, our own Hearts will tell us, That God is juſtly and highly diſpleaſed with us for our Sins; and that this Diſpleaſure of his will end in our total Ruin if it be not removed. Conſcience indeed is not always ſenſible of our Guilt; but 'tis ſoon awaken'd by

by any very ſharp Affliction: As the Seeds of ſome Diſtempers floating in a man's Blood, upon the Change of Weather, are apt to drop down into a tender and ſenſible Part, cauſing moſt acute Pains in the languiſhing Patient. No man therefore can have any rational and laſting Peace and Comfort of Mind, who is not well informed about the Forgiveneſs of Sins; which the Chriſtian alone, by the help of his Bible, can attain unto, but the Deiſt muſt be greatly bewildred about, who hath no other Inſtructor than the Light of Nature and Reaſon. For,

§. I. I. That cannot fully aſſure us that there is Forgiveneſs of Sin with God. If this could be Certainly known by meer Reaſon, it muſt be gathered, either from the *Eſſential Goodneſs of God*, or elſe from the *viſible Effects of his Bounty and Kindneſs.*

From

From the Former of theſe it can't be *Aſſuredly* inferr'd. For tho' Forgiveneſs of Sin hath its Riſe and Spring in the Infinite Benignity of God; yet it doth not flow thence by Neceſſity of Nature, but 'tis a free Act of his Will, and the Work of his Soveraign Grace and Pleaſure. And therefore the Argument of the Apoſtle is very ſtrong and clear, *As no man knoweth the things of a man, ſave the Spirit of a man which is in him: even ſo theſe things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God,* and he to whom he is pleaſed to Reveal them. A ſhrewd Man may gueſs at the ſecret Thoughts and Reſolves of his fellow-Creature, but he can't certainly know them; much leſs can we in affairs of This nature penetrate into the Mind of God. That Eye which is too weak to reach to the bottom of a ſhallow Stream, can never pierce to the loweſt Depths of the Ocean. 1 Cor. 2. 11.

Sinners

Sinners are worthy of Puniſhment, and 'tis not inconſiſtent with Goodneſs to inflict a deſerved Puniſhment on an Offender. God hath a Right to inflict; and who can aſſure us that he will remit his own Right, unleſs he himſelf declare his willingneſs to part with it? God neither will nor can exerciſe one Attribute of his to the Prejudice of another. He will not raiſe the honour of his Goodneſs on the Ruins of his Holineſs and Juſtice, or the Contempt of his Authority and Government: And how to reconcile theſe with the Pardoning of Sinners, is a puzzling Difficulty in which Reaſon cannot help us: And tho' it could, yet he is infinitely Juſt and Righteous, and therefore at leaſt he *may* reſolve to puniſh the Offender for ought that he knows; ſo that at the beſt it would be with our Souls, as 'tis fabulouſly reported to be with *Maho-*

Mahomet's Body in his Iron Coffin, that hangs in the Air between the upper and the neather Load-ſtone; ſo ſhould *we* be in Suſpence between encouraging Hopes and uneaſy Fears, which muſt needs create a mighty Torment in our Minds; this being a matter whereon our Welfare in both Worlds doth ſo intirely depend. The Scriptures tell us (and tho' that will have no weight with a Deiſt, yet it will with thoſe who own their Authority) that notwithſtanding the immenſe Goodneſs of God, yet Devils, who were originally more noble Creatures than we, remain bound in Chains of Guilt as well as Darkneſs, and are reſerved to the Judgment of the Great Day. And that there ſhould be Forgiveneſs for fallen Man, when there's none for Apoſtate Angels, who can aſſure us?

Nor can this be *Certainly* inferr'd from the viſible *Effects of Divine Bounty*

Bounty and Goodneſs. Men perceive indeed that God is Kind; but withal they frequently feel to their Coſt that he is Juſt, and know within themſelves that 'tis *Righteous in him to render Tribulation and Anguiſh to every evil-doer.* He doth do it in ſome terrible Inſtances in this World; and for ought that meer Reaſon can tell us, he may do the like in the other World too; tho' he may defer it for a Seaſon, as long as this preſent Life doth laſt; and fill mens Hearts with Food and Gladneſs for a Time, to reward thoſe broken Mixtures of Good that may be in them, or as a Recompence for ſome uſeful Service they may do (tho' his Glory be not deſigned by them therein), or to employ them as the Inſtruments of his Providence for the relieving or vexing of others: or for ſome other wiſe Ends that may be paſt our finding out. A Malefactor may know that

that his Prince is very good and kind, who for wiſe Reaſons of State, which he can't penetrate into, gives him an uncertain Reprieve *ſine Die*, keeps him in an airy Priſon, and feeds him there very plentifully at the Publick Charge: Yet this is but a very ſlender Argument that therefore he ſhall undoubtedly be pardon'd: Eſpecially if he know him to be a very Juſt and Righteous Governor, who greatly hates and deteſts the foul Crimes he hath been guilty of: And moſt of all, if the Priſoner enter into new Conſpiracies and Rebellions againſt him, while he is ſo lovingly treated: Which is the caſe of all Mankind with reference to God, who are daily provoking him, while they live every moment on his Bounty. The utmoſt that can be ſolidly gather'd from the common Patience and Goodneſs of God, is but ſome *looſe and faint Hopes*,

Hopes, which may encourage Sinners to hearken out and enquire after a way of Reconciliation with God. The *Ninivites* carried this matter as far as any can by meer natural Light and Reaſon, when they ſaid, *Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from the fierceneſs of his Anger, that we periſh not?* But then on the other hand, nothing being ſo ſuſpicious as a Guilty creature, eſpecially when he hath to do with a Holy and a Jealous God, he may as well ſay, *Who can tell but that God will Not turn, nor repent, nor turn away from the fierceneſs of his Anger*; and then we muſt periſh, and there is no remedy? We can never have a *firm* Foundation for a *Full and Comfortable perſuaſion*, that God will indeed forgive Sins, unleſs ſome Act of Grace and Indemnity be publiſh'd from Heaven to that end and purpoſe.

Jonah 3. 9.

Such

Such a one we read of in the Holy Scriptures, in which we have the higheſt Aſſurance that can be either given or deſired. We have a firm word of Promiſe frequently repeated, to build upon. The Son of God came down from Heaven on purpoſe to preach this Doctrine in his own Perſon. He hath purchaſed this Bleſſing for us by the ſharpeſt Sufferings. When he returned to Heaven, he commanded that *Remiſſion of Sins ſhould be preached in his Name*; and hath ſettled an Order of Men, who are appointed by this Argument to beſeech Sinners to be reconciled to God. This is one expreſs Article of the New Covenant which he hath ſealed with his own Blood, that *God will be merciful to our Iniquities, and our Sins he will remember no more.* He bequeathed this as his dying Legacy among all his ſincere Followers in his Laſt Will and Teſtament: A Luk. 24. 47.

Remembrance whereof he would have continually kept up among them; and in order thereunto he inſtituted the Ordinance of the Supper; for the *Cup* which we there drink of, is *the New Teſtament in his Blood, which was ſhed for the Remiſſion of our Sins.* And as a Prieſt he intercedes for this great Bleſſing, and as a King beſtows it on his People.

§. II. II. Suppoſe that Natural Light and Reaſon could aſſure us that God would forgive, yet it cannot certainly inform us *how far this Pardon ſhall reach*, either as to *Perſons, or Offences.* If we had been left barely to our own Thoughts and Conjectures in this matter, very few, if any, could have had a well-grounded comfortable Aſſurance, that they in particular ſhould find Mercy at the hands of God.

We

We could not reaſonably preſume, it ſhould be an Univerſal and Unlimited Pardon. Surely God will make Examples of ſome, and, for any thing I know, (might every one ſay) he may make one of Me, among the reſt: If any be excepted, why not I?

If I am a *mean* and inconſiderable Man, 'tis no great matter; no great loſs, if ſuch an one ſhould periſh: And I am the rather induced to fear that I ſhall, becauſe of the *Inequality* of the Divine Favour, in diſtributing temporal Mercies with ſo Sparing a hand to me, the beſtowing of which is *the chief Ground I have to hope for his Pardon.* And therefore thoſe, who are very low and poor, and under ſuch miſerable circumſtances, that they rather *indure* life, than *injoy* it, have Reaſon to ſuſpect the good will of God towards them; to whom he has given ſuch *weak and feeble Motives* to Re-

pentance, and ſuch *ſlight Grounds* to hope for a Pardon thereupon.

If I am a *Man of Figure*, for that very reaſon God may ſingle me out, to make his Power, his Juſtice, and his Wrath, ſo much the more Glorious. And generally wiſe Governors are wont to make ſome ſuch as theſe, Publick Examples of their juſt Diſpleaſure.

But be a man what he will, as to his Circumſtances in this World; there is none but has committed a great many Sins, and ſome of them are of a Crimſon Dye: For where is the Perſon to be found, who has not often offended againſt ſhining Light, and indearing Love; againſt alluring Mercies, and bitter Afflictions; againſt repeated Promiſes, and ſolemn Vows? Now 'tis true indeed, that any *ſingle* Sin, tho' of the *ſmalleſt* Size, will make ſad Work in the Conſcience, if it be ſet home with

with Power on the Heart: As the diſorder of any minute ſingle part of our Bodies, an inconſiderable Stone, or a ſmall quantity of Gravel in our Reins, will fill us with moſt exquiſite Pain. Yet generally it is the *Multitude* and *Greatneſs* of mens Sins, and the heinous *Aggravations* of them, that make the deepeſt wound in their Spirits. Hence God has given us ſo many repeated Declarations in his Holy Word, of the Fulneſs, the Plenty, the Riches of his pardoning Grace and Mercy; That he will forgive *iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin*; That the Blood of his Son *cleanſeth from all Unrighteouſneſs*, &c. Theſe Scriptures are like thoſe *Herbs*, which ſome curious Men tell us of, that have the Signature of thoſe parts of the Body, whoſe Griefs they are deſigned to aſſwage; Or the Figure and Colour of thoſe Diſeaſes, for the Cure whereof the kind Hand of

Nature has provided them. They clearly *ſhew* our Diſeaſe, as well as are intended to heal it; and plainly ſignify how hard a matter it is to ſettle the peace of a troubled Soul.

Nay the *Better* and *more Serious* any man is, ſo much the Greater would have been his Uncertainty and Perplexity in this matter: For the Better any man is, the more does he obſerve the inward Corruption of his own Heart, which others take no Notice, and make no Account of; And the deeper Senſe has he of the Holineſs and Juſtice of God, of the Vileneſs of his own Sins, of his Deſert of Wrath and Vengeance, and his Unworthineſs of Divine Favour.

And every man, but eſpecially ſuch a one knows ſo much More againſt *himſelf*, than he does againſt the Generality of Others; that it is reaſonable for him to conclude, that, all things conſidered, he is *one of the Chiefeſt*

Chiefeſt of Sinners. How natural is it therefore, for all, and eſpecially for ſuch, to cry out, Tho' peradventure there may be Mercy for Others, yet ſure there is none for Me; I am afraid, that I and My Crimes may be excepted, and that pardoning Grace ſhall not extend ſo very far as to take Me and my Sins within its Reach and Compaſs; that the Wing of Mercy will not be ſpread ſo wide, as to cover Me, and all my numerous and mighty Offences.

But now from this miſerable Diſtreſs, *Revelation* doth thoroughly deliver us, by certifying us, that, as *far as the Heavens are above the Earth,* Iſa. 53. *ſo far are God's Ways and Thoughts a-* 7, 8, 9. *bove ours:* And therefore he is ready *Abundantly to pardon.* Our Bleſſed Lord hath told us, *All manner of Sin* Mat. 12. *and Blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven. Blaſ-* 31. *phemy* is a wounding the Name of God. Now every Man is tender of

his Reputation as of the Apple of his Eye, and God is jealous of his own Honour. Yet, not only all other Offences, but even this too, of what ſort and kind ſoever, tho' attended with very aggravating Circumſtances, ſhall be forgiven *unto Men*; 'tis ſpoken indefinitely, to *Any* Man, (always provided he comply with the Conditions of the Goſpel), *the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt* only excepted. And 'tis very obſervable how theſe words are brought in. Our Saviour was now moſt highly provok'd by the malicious Phariſees, whoſe malignant Souls were poſſeſt by a worſe Devil than any of the Bodies of thoſe who were healed by him, and therefore wickedly imputed his Miracles to the Power of Satan. Our Lord did moſt heinouſly reſent this, as well he might. And yet before he thunders out Wrath and Vengeance againſt them, words of

of Grace drop from his Lips towards others, and Mercy gets the ſtart of Juſtice. He begins with theſe words, *Wherefore I ſay unto you, All manner of Sin and Blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men*; and afterwards adds, *But the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not be ſo.* And the Apoſtle tells us, that among others, this is one peculiar Excellency of Chriſt's Goſpel above *Moſes*'s Law, That whereas he that deſpiſed the latter by Sinning preſumptuouſly againſt it, died without Mercy; yet through the former ſuch an Ample Forgiveneſs was preached, *that by him all that believe are juſtified from All things from which they could not be juſtified by the Law of Moſes.* And at another time; That *where Sin has Abounded, there Grace ſhall much more Abound*; *i. e.* upon mens Compliance with the reaſonable Terms which God hath ſettled. Which brings me to the

Acts 13. 38, 39.

Rom. 5. 20.

III. The

§. III. III. The Light of Nature and Reaſon cannot fully aſſure us of the *Terms*, upon which Forgiveneſs may be had. It will indeed tell us, that God cannot but inſiſt upon *Repentance*: But the great Queſtion will be, Whether this alone will do? The Pleas which have been made for it will appear to be of no force; which are theſe,

1. That Repentance is *the* [a] *beſt thing a Man can DO*, and therefore God muſt be contented with it. So ſaith another, and he was a Perſon of great Worth, [b] *If the Sinner Repent, you have his Conſent, and his whole Heart; you have then gain'd his Mind and Soul, and he doth then all that is in him to DO. 'Tis all the* [c] *Satisfaction or Amends that we can make:*

[a] *Blount's* Aſſert. of Lord *Herbert's* Five Principles.

[b] Dr. *Whichcot's* Sermon, *p.* 318.

[c] *S. N.* Diſcourſe of Natural and Revealed Religion, *p.* 86.

Saith

Saith another Ingenious Advocate, *And ſeeing it is All that we can DO by way of Reparation for our Offences, tho' Juſtice will take no notice of it, yet Mercy will. If God is indeed a Merciful and Benign Being, he will moſt certainly accept the Payment we are able to make, and not inſiſt on Impoſſible Demands with his frail Bankrupt Creatures.*

But I do not know what *Statute-Law* Men have to oblige the Almighty to Compound with his poor Debtors, and eſpecially to take ſo very little as this is. To Repent, indeed, is one of the beſt things that a Sinner can *Do*; but if that be all he has to offer or ſay for himſelf, there is another thing that it becomes the Criminal to think on, beſides doing, and that is *Suffering*: And it is what he has Reaſon to reckon upon. We may ſay in this Caſe, as God does in another, *Go now, and offer* Mal. 1. 8.

offer it to thy Governor, and ſee whether he will accept it. Courts of Juſtice take very little notice of the Malefactor's Repentance. The Law muſt be obſerved, and Ordinarily the Offender muſt be puniſhed; And this is wont to be done, notwithſtanding the Mercy of the Judge, and without any Imputation of Injuſtice or Cruelty. Nay on the contrary, it would be Injuſtice, Cruelty, and fond Pity, if a Traytor, a Murderer, or the like Offender, after a Multitude of repeated enormous Crimes, ſhould be pardoned, merely becauſe he does repent.

Ibid. 2. 'Tis urged, That *no Generous Man, but will forgive his Enemy, much more his Children, if ſuch Enemy diſapproves the wrong he has done, is troubled and grieved for it, reſolves to be friendly and reſpectful for the time to come, &c. I ſay, there is no generous Man, but will forgive his Enemy, who*

is

is thus affected to him; How much more ſhall God forgive all Perſons thus Diſpoſed, and thus Reformed; ſeeing there is no Generoſity in Man, but what is, with his Nature, infuſed into him by God; or is an improvement only of the Divine Seed, which God our Maker planted in our Natures. But to this I reply: In many Caſes, *a Private* Perſon has no lawful Power to remit the Penalty of a Crime: As in the Caſe of the Murder of a near Relation, or the deep wounding of a Man's Reputation, on the publick vindicating whereof, his Uſefulneſs, the Honour of Religion, and the Good of many Souls, may depend. But however, God muſt be conſidered, not as a Private Perſon, but as a *Publick* one, as the Holy, Juſt *Rector* of the World, under whoſe deep Diſpleaſure we are fallen by our Sins, as this *Author* himſelf cannot but acknowledge afterwards. Id. p. 234.

Now,

Now, the Caſe of a *Private* Perſon, and a *Publick* One, is vaſtly different. It is ordinarily neceſſary, for the Honour of the Government, and the Publick Good, that Offenders and Diſturbers of the Common Order, ſhould be reſtrained and puniſhed. And if this Plea had any thing in it, the Magiſtrate muſt forgive every Delinquent, how Notorious ſoever, if he do but approve himſelf a true Penitent: Whereas God does command the Magiſtrate, as his Vicegerent, to inflict the Penalty on Offenders notwithſtanding their Repentance; and in ſo doing, they act as the Miniſters of God: What they do, is his Act more than theirs. Yea, God himſelf, in the Courſe of his Providence, does lay very ſevere Judgments upon them that are truly Penitent, (of which more by and by). 'Tis further pleaded:

3. *Wiſdom*

3. *Wiſdom will effectually diſpoſe God to forgive the Penitent, becauſe the Creature is reformed by Repentance, is made ſuch as it ought to be, and ſuch as God willeth; which being ſo, it cannot be now Wiſdom to deſtroy it by Puniſhment, or to afflict it unneceſſarily: It is not Juſtice, but Rage, to Puniſh, when the Perſon to be puniſhed is already Amended.* This is further enforced by another, becauſe *to inflict Evil hath only in it the Notion of a Remedy, the Place of a MEAN, not of an END. Now we know that no more of a Mean is deſigned than what is neceſſary for the End.------ Therefore I take it for granted, that where there is Wiſdom and Goodneſs in the Agent, all Puniſhment is for Inſtruction, Reformation, and bettering of the Offender, or for Example to By-ſtanders. And I cannot tell what is Good in Puniſhment, but theſe TWO.* (But let him that can tye Contradictions together,

Id. p. 86.

Dr. *Whichcot.* Serm. *p.* 314.

together, reconcile this with the following Words of the ſame Great Man, viz. *Puniſhment in the Hand of God, is either for the* MAINTAINING HIS AUTHORITY, or for the DEFENCE of RIGHTEOUSNESS, or for the Reformation of a Sinner, or for an Effectual Admonition to the By-ſtander. Where the TWO in the compaſs of a very few Pages, are encreaſed to FOUR. But he goes on.) *If the Sinner leave off to Sin, and condemn himſelf; then the Neceſſity of Puniſhment is taken away: For that for which Puniſhment is made uſe of, is obtained without Puniſhment. And we never make uſe of a Mean, if the End be obtained.*

Id. p. 318.

Id. p. 317.

But to this I Reply, This whole arguing proceeds on a wrong Suppoſition, That the *Reformation* of the Offender is the *only end of Puniſhment*: Whereas Satisfaction to the Law

Law, the Honour of the Government, the Expiation of the Crimes committed, are at leaſt as noble Ends, and as neceſſary, if not more ſo, than that. Without due care in this Matter, the Divine Threatenings will appear to be like thoſe Flaming *Swords* that ſometimes hang in the Air, vain Meteors, and mere *Vapours*, that have no real Edge; and in the Judgment of many wiſe Men, do not præſignify any future Calamities that ſhall certainly follow, but only ſerve to affright weak and ſuperſtitious Minds.

How confidently ſoever ſome Men may talk, yet they have the Common Senſe of all Mankind lying againſt them. Who will ſatisfy Divine Juſtice? Who will make our Peace with the Offended Majeſty of Heaven? Has been a moſt puzzling Inquiry in all Ages. The Heathens ſaw ſomewhat more was neceſſary

than a bare Reformation of Manners, to appeaſe the Anger of their Gods; and rather than depend upon that alone, have thought it more Rational to take up with any thing, even the moſt fooliſh, and extravagant, and brutiſh Contrivances of Purgations, and Offerings, of Humane Blood and Sacrifices. *Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow my ſelf before the High God? Shall I come before him with Burnt-offerings, with Calves of a Year old? Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of Rams, or with ten thouſands of Rivers of Oil? Shall I give my Firſt-born for my tranſgreſſion, the fruit of my Body for the ſin of my Soul?* Yea, the great Patriarch of Natural, and bitter Enemy to Revealed Religion, after all his Confidence, That meer Repentance would expiate mens Offences, was himſelf, at a loſs in this matter, as appears by the following Paſſage:

Micah 6. 7.

Theſe

* *Theſe five Articles* (*viz.* 1. The Being of God. 2. That he is to be Worſhipp'd. 3. That Virtue is the principal part of Divine Worſhip. 4. That we ought to Repent of our Sins. 5. That there are Rewards and Puniſhments in the preſent and future life) *every one, without doubt, will acknowledge to be Good and Catholick: but ſome will pretend they are not ſufficient to Eternal Salvation. But he that ſhall ſo ſay, is a bold man, and, in my opinion, pronounces a cruel and raſh Sentence.*

* Et quidem quinque hos Articulos bonos, Catholicoſque eſſe, unuſquiſque procul-dubio fatebitur: ad Salutem tamen æternam comparandam, non ſufficere perhibebunt nonnulli. Cæterum qui ita locutus fuerit, næ ille quidem audax, nedum ſævum temerariumque effatum (meâ ſententiâ) protulerit; quum nulli ſatis explorata ſint judicia Divina: quam etiam ob cauſam, neque eas ſufficere protinus dixerim: attamen magis probabilis mihi videtur eorum opinio qui æquè pie ac leniter de Dei Judiciis ſtatuunt, dum homo quod in ſe eſt præſtat. *Herbert de Religione Gentilium, p.* 217.

Seeing the Judgments of God are not fully known, for which Reaſon neither will I peremptorily ſay they are Sufficient, &c. Such is the Power of Truth, that it will be reveng'd on its fierceſt Adverſaries, and force them who contradict *it*, to contradict *themſelves* alſo.

4. 'Tis urged, that *God is our Common* * *Father, and will not ſeverely animadvert on his Penitent Child*: Or, as another † enforces it, God *hath ſtamp'd Impreſſions of Goodneſs and Kindneſs throughout the whole Creation.---Every thing maintains its own Off-ſpring, and endeavours to bring it to good (according to the ſeveral Natures of every kind)*,

* Si juſtitiæ Divinæ haut factum ſatis ex Pœnitentia dixiſſent fortè Sacerdotes, acerbioremque quàm ex dolore interno exigi debere pœnam contendiſſent, hiſce ita occurri tum temporis potuit, Deum Summum eſſe Patrem communem, adeoque in Filium Pœnitentem haut graviter animadverſurum. Herbert *de Relig. Gentil. p.* 199.

† Dr. *Whichcot*'s Sermons, p. 310.

and

and if it be capable, it bears its Off-ſpring Affection.---- Now whatever * *Perfection is found in any Creature, is in God Primarily, Originally and Eſſentially. We all commend the Merciful and Compaſſionate Diſpoſition above the Cruel and Malicious. And ſhall we attribute that to God, which we condemn in any Creature?* But ſure 'tis not reaſonable to inſinuate that God is *cruel* and *malicious* for puniſhing Delinquents: Eſpecially conſidering what this Reverend Author ſaith in the very next Page, *viz. If God* † *do puniſh Sin, he doth that which is Juſt.* And ſhould I argue, that becauſe God is *Originally, Primarily and Eſſentially Juſt*, and therefore he will certainly puniſh Sinners, if this be all they have to plead that they do Repent, it would hold altogether as ſtrongly as his arguing from his *Goodneſs* that he will forgive them

* Id. p. 312.
† Id. p. 313.

barely upon their ſo doing. We all commend Juſtice in Men, and eſpecially in a Magiſtrate, and cenſure the lazy and fond Neglect of it. And ſhall *we attribute that to God which we condemn in the Creature?* Or ſhall there be any Excellency or Perfection in us which is wanting in him? He *that made the Eye, ſhall not He ſee? and he who formed the Ear, ſhall not He hear?* Beſides, 'tis as certain that God is our Common *Ruler*, as that he is our Common Parent; and 'tis Matter of Fact that he do's inflict very ſevere Penalties on his Rebellious Subjects, notwithſtanding their Repentance.

5. 'Tis further urged, That *Men are by Nature* * *frail Creatures, and liable to Sin.* And that, † *tho' the Act of a Creature may be aggravated in*

* ---Homines naturâ ſuâ fragiles peccatoque obnoxios eſſe. Herbert *de Relig. Gentil. ubi ſupra.*

† Dr. *Whichcot*'s Sermon, p. 321.

re-

reſpect of the Perſon againſt whom it is committed, yet in themſelves our Sins *are but Acts of Weakneſs, and they are ſo in God's Account and Eſteem*, &c. And if there were as much *Weakneſs* in All of them as there is in this Objection, a man might be hard put to it to make a Reply. But are our Wilful and Heinous Provocations to be dwindled away and ſhrunk up into Sins of *Infirmity*? If all our Sins are both *in Themſelves and in God's Account but Acts of Weakneſs*, I don't know why they ſhould not be ſo in *Ours* too. For we can't do better than to entertain ſuch Sentiments as are agreeable to the Nature of *Things*, and the *Judgment of God* himſelf. But Good men have not been wont to take up with ſuch Notions as theſe. *Saul* urged for himſelf in the matter of the *Amalekites*; That he did not reſerve part of the Spoil from any evil Deſign, but from a good Intention,

to have wherewithal to furniſh out a Sacrifice to the Lord; and tho' he was their King, yet in this the People *over-ruled* him, and it would have looked odly for him to have been leſs forward and zealous to provide for God's Worſhip than his Subjects were. But yet for all this, *Samuel* charges him roundly for it, and tells him it was *Rebellion and Stubborneſs*, which are *as the Sin of Witchcraft, Iniquity and Idolatry.* And holy Men have been wont to think as ill of their Own as of other mens Sins upon this Account. Holy *David* aggravates his folly from this Circumſtance, *viz.* the Perſon againſt whom it was committed. And he ſo intently fixed his Eye upon this, as tho' none elſe had been offended by him. *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned.* And God himſelf, by the Mouth of *Nathan*, whom he ſent to him, warmly expoſtulates with him, *Wherefore haſt*

1 Sam. 15. 21, 22, 23.

Pſ. 51. 4.

2 Sam. 12. 9, 10.

haſt thou deſpiſed the Commandment of the Lord to do Evil in his Sight? And agen immediately after, *Thou haſt deſpiſed Me*, ſaith he to him in the Name of God. And this is not only the Language of God in the Scriptures, but in his daily Providences too. Let any man conſider the numerous Calamities wherewith many times the World is covered as with a black Cloud, behold the Strugglings of dying Infants, liſten to the Cries of a wounded Spirit, and attend to the Groans of a departing Sinner, and then let him judge whether the Sins of Men are Acts of *Weakneſs* in God's Account and Eſteem.

Scripture indeed is brought in to countenance this ſtrange Aſſertion: For 'tis ſaid * *he knoweth our Frame.* But if we read on to the end of the Verſe, it will appear that this is not ſpoken Pſ. 103. 14.

* Id. p. 322.

of

of the Corruption of our Natures, but the Weakneſs and Frailty of our Conſtitution: For 'tis added, *He remembreth that we are but Duſt.* And the ſame is the true ſenſe and meaning of that other Text which is preſs'd into this Service, *For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth:* as is evident from the following words, which contain the true reaſon of theſe; not becauſe their Miſcarriages are *the weak Acts of finite and fallible Creatures*, &c. but becauſe then *the Spirit ſhould fail before me, and the Souls which I have made.* I might add, This is a Gracious Promiſe, which we know by meer Revelation, whereas we are treating of what may be known by the meer Light of Nature and Reaſon.

Iſa. 57. 16.

In ſhort, no Man would with any Patience bear ſuch a Plea as this in the Mouth of his Servant or Child, for their wilful Contempt and Defiance

fiance of his Authority. And ſuch talk as this, is one of the moſt effectual ways to give a fatal Check to the working of that Repentance which ſome deſign ſo much to extol; and which indeed can hardly be extolled too much, provided Men do it not ſo, as to juſtle a Mediator, and the Neceſſity of Faith in him in order to forgiveneſs, out of the World. For the chief Conſideration that melts down an Ingenuous Spirit into a Godly Sorrow, is this, the Wiſdom, Majeſty, Authority, Power, Goodneſs, and Juſtice of God whom he hath diſpleaſed. So that ſome Men by endeavouring to advance Repentance, do indeed diminiſh and diſcourage it; as the Sun by raiſing up Vapours out of a River, leſſens the Quantity of Water that was in it.

6. 'Tis

6. 'Tis urged, That *for* * *the moſt part Mens Sins are not committed ſo much in Deſpight to God, as for their own Advantage, under the plauſible ſhew of ſome Appearing Good.* And if this be all that a Thief or a Murderer have to ſay for themſelves, That the one robbed, and the other aſſaſſinated his Neighbour, not out of any direct Deſign to affront the Law or Government, but meerly to get a good Sum of Money, or to be reveng'd on his Enemy, which to them did ſeem very deſirable, this would never prevent the pronouncing or executing the Sentence of Death upon them.

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*---Peccata Hominum non tam in Dei contumeliam, quàm in propriam utilitatem ſub boni alicujus apparentis obtentu fieri plerumque; ac licet in eo Nomines fallerentur, nihil tamen infenſo in Deum animo patratum fuiſſe. *Herbert ubi ſupra.*

7thly. Laſtly, 'Tis yet further argued, That *'tis Worthy* * *of God to Pardon Penitents. It is more effectual to the Purpoſe of God's Honour and Glory. For when he Pardons, he procures himſelf Love, and gains the Heart and Soul of his Creature. But if he puniſh, the Party endures becauſe God is Stronger, and the Creature cannot make Reſiſtance.* And again, *'Tis* † *a greater Excellency to win and reconcile by Gentleneſs and Fairneſs, than to overcome by Power and Force. To win and overcome by fair Means, by Reaſon and Argument, by Courteſy and Gentleneſs, theſe ſhew Wiſdom and Goodneſs; but to cruſh and ſubdue may be done by Power and Subtilty; by Power, becauſe the Perſon cannot make Defence; by Subtilty, becauſe the Perſon was ſurprized and taken at unawares.* But the Caſe is not very fairly put. Here

* Dr. *Whitchcot's* Serm. p. 313.
† P. 318, 319.

is mention made of the invidious Words of *Power*, and *Force*, and *Subtilty*, and the Creatures *Weakneſs*, which are not the Springs of God's puniſhing Men; but not a word of Holineſs and Juſtice, Preſervation of Publick Order, the Honour of the Divine Law and Government, or the Deſert of the Offender, which are the true Cauſes of it. Men do not ſuffer, becauſe God bears them down by main Force, as an Oppreſſor; or outwits and over-reaches them by Craft; but becauſe they have deſerved Puniſhment; and theſe valuable Ends, which I am ſure 'tis *Wiſdom* effectually to ſecure, do call for the inflicting of it. And as for *Goodneſs*, it never was the Intent of God, nor can it be for his Glory, as Governor of the World, to repreſent himſelf as a Being of *meer Clemency* and *Kindneſs*. No Creature would be more deſpicable than

than a living King reſembling his own Marble or Brazen Statue, with a Scepter in its Hand, which it never ſtirs, and a broad Sword lifted up in a very threatning Poſture, as tho' it would cleave any Man in two that came near it; but this terrible Inſtrument is in a *dead* Hand that never gives a Stroke; and therefore is fit only to take up ſo much Room, and ſtand for a Shew in a Publick Place, where the ſmalleſt Bird or Inſect would quickly make bold with it, and pitch upon it without any Fear or Concern. And God may, tho' he Chaſtize the Guilty, be for ever ſecure of the Reputation of that his Goodneſs, having given abundant Demonſtrations of it towards all his Creatures, and knowing further how in a glorious manner to diſplay it towards thoſe who never offended him. And Sinners having abuſed that Attribute, 'tis but

rational

rational to fear that his other Attributes ſhould be employed to repair the Injuries and Diſhonours which have been caſt upon it.

But he adds to the ſame purpoſe, *The Creatures ſuffering Puniſhment*, is but a very SORRY AMENDS for Tranſgreſſion. For what doth God GAIN by it? God is ſo far from being recompenc'd by the Sufferings of CONTUMACIOUS Sinners, that I dare ſay 'tis more ſatisfactory to God, more according to his Mind, that a Sinner ſhould repent, and humbly acknowledge his Offence in this State in which he is, than undergo the Suffering of the Damned to Eternity. For God GAINS NOTHING by the one, but he hath the Heart of the Delinquent by the other.* Theſe Words (and they are not the only ones in this Learned Man's Sermon, as publiſhed by his

* Id. p. 319.

Friend)

Friend) may be carried ſo far as to countenance the wild Opinion of *Origen*, That the wicked in Hell, yea, Devils themſelves at laſt ſhall be ſaved; and it may be a little further. For 'tis hard to think, That God ſhould continue CONTUMACIOUS SINNERS in exquiſite and Eternal Torments, or indeed ſeverely puniſh them for any long Period of Time, if he GAIN NOTHING at all thereby. But I will Confront this with another Paſſage in a Sermon of this * Great Man: Where mentioning that Scripture, *God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son*, &c. He adds, It *muſt be attributed to his Goodneſs and Compaſſion*, &c. *It was that which he was NO GAINER by; for our Righteouſneſs is not profitable to him*; and I ſay, no more is our Love. So that it ſeems whether God ſave

* Id. p. 50.

or deſtroy, he *gains nothing* at all either by the one, or the other. Neither, indeed, is it poſſible that he ſhould, if thereby be meant any Addition to his intrinſical Excellency or Happineſs, for that was always, and ever will be infinitely perfect and incapable of any Increaſe or Diminution. But in a way of *Manifeſtation* he doth *Gain* very much in puniſhing Sinners. For hereby he doth evidence his Holineſs, and Hatred of Sin, the Severity of his Juſtice, and the Exactneſs of his Truth, which is no ſuch very SORRY AMENDS for Tranſgreſſion, as it is very unwarily aſſerted to be. And 'tis as true he may, and doth *Gain* very much in this Senſe in pardoning Sinners for the ſake of Chriſt's Satisfaction on their Repentance and Faith in him. For upon this Bottom he doth it on Terms that are Honourable to himſelf; but that it would be ſo, to do it

on

on meer Repentance without any reſpect to the atoning Blood of a Mediator (of which unenlighten'd Reaſon knows not a Syllable) doth not yet appear. And tho' he loſe the Hearts of Sinners whom he puniſhes, yet we have Reaſon to ſuppoſe (what Revelation doth abundantly aſſure us of) that the bright and ſpacious Heavens are filled with nobler Inhabitants than the little Spot of this dirty Earth, on which we tread: that there are (to uſe the Words of an * Excellent Perſon) *Numberleſs Myriads of Wiſe and Holy Sages in the other World, the continual Obſervers of all his Diſpenſations, that behold them with equal unbiaſs'd Minds, and from the Evidence of the Matter give their Concurrent Approbation, and Applauſe.-------- Great and marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty, juſt*

* Mr. *How's* Right Uſe of that Argument from the Name of God, *p.* 34.

and true are thy ways. But it is Enough and much more Conſiderable to approve himſelf to himſelf, and that all his Diſpenſations are guided according to the Steady and Eternal Reaſon of Things. For as he well Speaks in another place of the ſame * Diſcourſe, *The Glory of God's Name muſt be underſtood to be Primarily an Objective Glory, that ſhines with a Conſtant and Equal Luſtre in all his Diſpenſations, whether Men Obſerve or Obſerve it not. And ſhines Primarily to Himſelf, ſo as that he hath the perpetual Self-Satisfaction of doing as truly becomes him, and what is in it Self reputable, Worthy of him, and Apt to approve it Self to a right Mind (as his Own ever is) let Men think of his Ways as they pleaſe.*

No Travellers have yet found out that imaginary Neck of Land whereby 'tis ſuppoſed that *Aſia* and *America* are joined together. No man by

* Id. p. 8, 9.

meer

meer Reaſon can diſcover the certain Connection between Repentance and Pardon. But here Revelation doth relieve us. The Holy Scriptures acquaint us that Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt on the one hand, and Remiſſion on the other, are inſeparably united. The Apoſtles Commiſſion runs in this form, *To open mens Eyes, and to turn them from Darkneſs to Light, and the Power of Satan to God, that they may receive the Forgiveneſs of their Sins, and an Inheritance among them that are Sanctified by Faith that is in me.* Acts 26. 18.

§. IV.

IV. We can have no Certainty by meer Natural Light, *When* God will Pardon us, if he do it at all. Wiſe Governors are not wont to receive into Favour great Offenders, who have gone on in a long courſe of Rebellion, upon their firſt Offers of Submiſſion. If we have nothing but

our own Reaſon to guide us, we might well ſuppoſe, that in Order to make us more deeply ſenſible of our Crimes, and teach us the Value of ſo great a Mercy, God may let us ſtand a long while in an humble Penitent manner at his Gate, before he vouchſafe to open it to us, if ever he do ſo. Now beſides that Uneaſineſs of Mind which the being held in Suſpence in ſo important an Affair, muſt needs create in a Serious and Conſidering Perſon, there is this further afflictive Conſideration, That our Lives are very ſhort and uncertain. And if the King of Terrors ſhould ſeize us before our Peace be made with God, we are undone: Or if it ſurprize us before we have any ſolid Grounds to believe he is reconciled to us, our Departure out of this World will be like that of a Malefactor out of his Priſon, who goes trembling to the Place of Execution, knowing nothing

thing of a Pardon till he comes thither, being half killed with the Fears, tho' he eſcape the Stroke of Death.

But here Revelation gives us Light and Comfort: For it certifies us, that no ſooner do we ſincerely turn to God in Chriſt, but immediately our Sins are blotted out. *I acknowledged my Sin unto thee*, ſaith *David*, *and mine Iniquity have I not hid: I ſaid I will confeſs my Tranſgreſſion unto the Lord*: and then it is preſently added in the ſame Verſe, *And thou forgaveſt the Iniquity of my Sin.* The Words do not more cloſely follow one another, than God's gracious Pardon did his Candid and Penitent Confeſſion; nor was this a Favour peculiar to the Pſalmiſt, but 'tis recorded for the Encouragement of others: As he himſelf intimates in the following Verſe; *For this ſhall every one that is Godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayeſt be found.* No ſooner doth Pſ 32. 5. Ver. 6.

Ephraim begin to relent, but God is brought in, Speaking after the manner of a moſt Tender and Compaſſionate Father, whoſe Soul is melted down upon the Return of his diſobedient Child. *Is Ephraim my dear Son? Is he a pleaſant Child?* Or rather, as a Learned Man reads the words, *Is not Ephraim my dear Son? Is he not a pleaſant Child? For ſince I ſpake againſt him, I remember him ſtill: Therefore my Bowels are troubled for him, I will ſurely have Mercy upon him, ſaith the Lord.* The Publican, who in a ſenſe of his Vileneſs, *ſtood afar off*, and, as an Argument of his Shame, *would not ſo much as lift up his Eyes towards Heaven*, but, in token of his great Contrition, *ſmote upon his Breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me a Sinner, went down to his houſe juſtified*; *i. e.* abſolved and acquitted of God: and ſo the wretched Thankſgiving of the Proud Phariſee, *Lord, I thank thee*

Jer. 31. 18, 19, 20.

Gataker in locum.

Luk. 18. 13, 14.

I am

I am not as other men, or even as this Publican, was utterly ruin'd.

V. Meer Natural Light and Reaſon gives us no Aſſurance whether, and how often God will *renew* his Pardon. Freſh Breaches, after a Reconciliation, are very provoking. Every one would be apt to deſpiſe that Government which ſtill ſhould Spare a Traitor, who hath been pardon'd once and again, and after that breaks out into other Rebellions. There is ſuch a Complication of aggravating Circumſtances in returning to the Commiſſion of Folly, that we could rationally expect no other than that Divine Juſtice thereupon ſhould ſeize us, and ſay to us, *Pay me what you Owe*: If God in his holy Word had not encouraged us, and made it our Duty to believe and hope that upon our deep Humiliation and renewed Faith in the Blood of Chriſt, he will yet §. V.

be

be pacified towards us. *Ye have played the Harlot with many Lovers* (which is an Offence of that nature, that a man would never paſs by one Single act of it; but it hath been frequently repeated by you with Variety of Perſons, and therefore you can well look for no other than a Bill of Di-
Jer. 3. 1, 22. vorce, yet) *return unto me, ſaith the Lord. Return ye back-ſliding Children, and I will heal your back-ſlidings.* And if an *awaken'd* Conſcience tells us our Treacherous Dealings have been many, and we are no more worthy to be regarded by him; yet the Invita-
Hoſ. 14. 2, 4. tion is, *Take unto you Words, and turn to the Lord, and ſay unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciouſly*: and then follow thoſe reviving Words, *I will heal all their back-ſlidings, and I will love them freely.*

There are indeed two Paſſages in the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* which ſeem to oppoſe this; and 'tis ſufficiently known

known how the *Novatians* abuſed them of Old; and many ſerious, but weak Chriſtians, have in all Ages been tormented through a miſunderſtanding of them. Which therefore I ſhall largely conſider, and ſo much the rather, becauſe being rightly interpreted, I am afraid they will appear to have a very black Aſpect on ſome of our preſent Deiſts. The one is, That *it is impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlighten'd*, &c. *If they ſhall fall away, to renew them again unto Repentance, ſeeing they Crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open Shame.* The other is of the like Import: *For if we ſin wilfully after that we have received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins; but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation, which ſhall devour the Adverſaries.* This paſſage, at the firſt View, ſeems to render the caſe

Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6.

Ch. 10. 26, 27.

of

of every Man wholly deſperate. And it would much more do ſo, if one word were exactly tranſlated. For whereas we render it, *If we ſin Wilfully*, according to the Original it ſhould be tranſlated, If we ſin *Willingly*, which is the Softer word of the two. And who is there that dares to deny but that he hath been guilty of many Voluntary Sins, even ſince he hath received the Knowledge of the Truth?

ἑκουσίως.

Now I ſhall endeavour to prove, that both theſe Places are to be underſtood barely of the *Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, only it would be attended in theſe *Hebrews*, if they ſhould be guilty of it, with more aggravating Circumſtances, than that ſame Sin in the *Phariſees* was accompanied withal. Becauſe the Perſons offending are ſuppoſed by the Apoſtle

ſtle once to have been the Profeſſed Diſciples of Chriſt, which the *Phariſees* never were; and becauſe if they ſhould commit it, they would ſin againſt greater Miracles for the proof of Chriſtianity, ſince the more plentiful Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt after the Aſcenſion of Chriſt.

For here is the Characteriſtical Note whereby our Bleſſed Saviour hath diſtinguiſh'd the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt from all other Sins and Blaſphemies whatſoever, *viz.* the Unpardonableneſs of it. In the former of theſe Places it is ſaid, that 'tis *Impoſſible to renew theſe men to Repentance*: Which is in other words to ſay, 'tis Impoſſible they ſhould be forgiven. For why is it, that the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall never be forgiven, but becauſe 'tis impoſſible they ſhould ever Repent who have been guilty of it? And then the Apoſtle in the very next words

words doth oppoſe them that ſhould be guilty of this Sin, to that
Heb. 6. 7, 8. *Ground which receiveth Bleſſing from God*, and compares them to that which *beareth thorns and briars, and is rejected and nigh unto Curſing, and whoſe End is to be burnt.* And in the latter place the Apoſtle tells us, that as for
Ch. 10. 26. theſe Men, *there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins.* Which words are a plain Alluſion to the Law of *Moſes*, in which no Expiations were allowed or appointed for Heinous and Preſumptuous Sins, but he who was guilty of them, was to be put to Death without any Favour. 'Tis as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, There is no other Sacrifice for Sins but what the Son of God hath offered up; this they impiouſly reject, and Chriſt never deſign'd to make any atonement by his Blood for the Sin I am now ſpeaking of, and there is no other: And where there is no Expia-

Expiation, there can be no Pardon. He further adds, There *remains nothing* for theſe men, *but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery Indignation which ſhall devour the adverſaries.* What more Significant and Emphatical Words could the Apoſtle uſe to expreſs the Unpardonableneſs of their Crime? And yet as tho' this had not been enough, he further compares their Caſe to that of thoſe Men *who deſpiſed the law of Moſes*, either by renouncing or abjuring it, or Sinning impudently and preſumptuouſly againſt it, and who therefore *died without Mercy.* And to convince us that the Offenders he is ſpeaking of, ſhould be unavoidably preſſed to Death, he lays more Weight on them than on the Deſpiſers of *Moſes*'s Law. For, ſaith he, *Of how much ſorer Puniſhment ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God*, &c.

Ver. 27.

Ver. 28,

29.

'Tis

'Tis further evident from the Nature of the Sin here mentioned, that the Apoſtle is ſpeaking of the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt. The formal nature of that dreadful Sin I take to be this, A malicious reproaching our Bleſſed Saviour as an Impoſtor and Deceiver, imputing the Miracles which he wrought by the Spirit of God for the Confirmation of his Holy Doctrine and Miſſion, to the Power of the Devil. A man would wonder, if there were not a thouſand Inſtances of the like kind, how ſo many Learned Men could make a ſhift ſo much to miſtake this clear and plain notion of this Sin, and give us ſo many Extravagant Opinions concerning it, as widely diſtant from each other, as all of them are from the Truth; who doth but conſider how St. *Mark* cloſes the Speech of our Saviour concerning it. For he winds up all with

with theſe remarkable words, *Becauſe they ſaid, he hath an Unclean Spirit*: which give us a clear Light whereby to diſcern the nature of this Sin. But ſome rather chuſe, as an Evidence of their great Strength, to endeavour to break through the Walls, than turn the *Key* that is very plainly in the Door, and would eaſily open it, and let them into the Houſe. Mark 3. 30.

Now that 'tis this Sin, *viz.* the Reproaching Chriſt as a Deceiver, the Apoſtle is here ſpeaking of, will appear from the Expreſſions which he uſeth concerning it. He calls it *a Crucifying the Son of God afreſh, and putting him to an open Shame: A treading him under foot, and counting his Blood an unholy thing, and doing Deſpite to the Spirit of Grace.* All which do amount to this, That they eſteemed Chriſt to be a Vile Malefactor, a wretched Impo- Ch. 6. 6. Ch. 10. 29.

ſtor; that his Miracles, which for the Matter of Fact they could not deny, were wrought by the help of the Infernal Powers, and therefore he was deſervedly put to death; and had it been to do again, they would as readily have done it, as ever the Malicious *Jews* did.

Moreover, the Sin here ſpoken of,
Ch. 6. 6. in one of the Places, is called *a falling away*, and that from the *Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt*, which in the Verſes immediately foregoing
Ver. 1, 2. he had newly mentioned; *i. e.* a total Renouncing of the Chriſtian Faith, and Returning either to *Judaiſm* or *Paganiſm*, which theſe *Hebrews* were in great danger of, and which 'tis the apparent Deſign of this Epiſtle to fortify them againſt. And tho' in the other place it be called only in
Ch. 10. 26. the General *a Sinning Wilfully* or *Willingly*, yet thereby the ſame thing is meant.

meant. For juſt before the Apoſtle had been exhorting them to *hold faſt the Profeſſion of their Faith without wavering*, and cautioning them againſt *forſaking the Aſſembling of themſelves together, as the manner of ſome was*; which was the natural Means, and the *Ouvert*-Act and Sign of their Apoſtacy. And then theſe Words are brought in, *For if we ſin wilfully*, &c. *i. e.* If we caſt away the Profeſſion of our Faith, forſake the Chriſtian Aſſemblies, and renounce the Doctrine of Chriſt. Ver. 23. Ver. 25.

Now it is worthy of our careful Obſervation, that the Heathens, but eſpecially the *Jews*, were ſo implacably bent againſt our Bleſſed Lord, that tho' a Chriſtian did deſert the Aſſemblies of the Faithful, and offer to join with them in their Judaical or Pagan Religion and Worſhip, yet this *alone* would not ſuffice; But beſides this, they required an expreſs

Abjuring, and Reviling, and Blaſpheming Chriſt as an Impoſtor. And without this, their Rage was never ſatisfied; and to ſpeak in the modern Language, they never thought they had fully performed all the neceſſary *Duties of New Converts.* St. *Paul* tells us, that when he perſecuted the Chriſtians, being *exceeding mad with Rage, he compelled them to Blaſpheme*, as he Himſelf alſo did. And giving the *Corinthians* a Character whereby to diſtinguiſh between Divine and Diabolical Spirits, *I give you to underſtand* (Saith he) *that no man ſpeaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jeſus Accurſed*; which doth plainly imply, that it was very uſual for men to do ſo in that Age, for otherwiſe this Note of his would have been of no manner of Service to them. *Pliny*, in his Epiſtle to *Trajan*, informs him what was the *Ordeal* Fire by which he tried thoſe who were ſuſpected and accuſed, whether

Acts 26. 11. 1 Tim. 1. 13. 1 Cor. 13. 3.

ther they would diſown Chriſtianity, not only by propoſing to them to worſhip the Heathen Gods, and the Image of the Emperor, but alſo by demanding of them whether *præterea Chriſto malediceret*, they would *alſo revile Chriſt.* And he further adds concerning thoſe that fell in that hour of Temptation, that they not only worſhipp'd the Pagan Idols and *Trajan*'s Image, but alſo that *Ii & Chriſto maledixerunt*, they *reviled Chriſt.* And *Juſtin Martyr* * tells us, That *Barchochebas*, the Ringleader of the *Jewiſh* Rebellion, did order the Chriſtians to be ſeverely puniſht, unleſs they would not only deny Chriſt, but blaſpheme him too. And *Polycarp* being required, in order to ſave his Life, to *reproach* † Chriſt, replied, How can I *Blaſpheme* my King and Saviour.

* Apol. 2d. p. 72. Edit. Paris.
† Euſeb. Hiſt. l. 4. c. 15.

And our Learned † *Lightfoot* ſaith, That as early as about the 10th or 11th Year after our Saviour's Aſcenſion, *Rabban Gamaliel and the Sanhedrin appointed a new Prayer, in which was a Petition to God to deſtroy the Hereticks*, i. e. the Chriſtians; *and this he ſet among the Common Prayers, and appointed it to be in every man's Mouth. And that the Jews had their Emiſſaries every where abroad, that to their utmoſt cried down the Goſpel*------ and *blaſphemed it, and Chriſt that gave it. Of this* (ſaith he) *there is Teſtimony abundant in the New Teſtament, and in their own Writings.*

So much ſhall ſuffice to prove, that 'tis the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt; but a more Aggravated one than that of the *Phariſees*, that is meant in both theſe Places. And if

† Harm. of N. Teſt. p. 289, 290. Vol. 1.

any

any of our Modern Deiſts have been *maliciouſly* guilty of this *Sin unto death*, I leave them to God.

But provided a man hath not gone ſo great a Length as this is, how many ſoever his Sins and Back-ſlidings from God have been, yet on a renewed deep and Sincere Repentance, and a lively Faith in the Blood of Chriſt, they ſhall be remitted. Tho' I muſt add in the words of *Moſes*, *Let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully with God any more.* For if this Grace be turned into Wantonneſs, tho' God forgive Men, yet he may and will *take vengeance upon their Inventions.*

Exod. 8. 29.

Pſ. 99. 8.

And this naturally leads me to the Laſt thing which remains to be ſpoken unto.

VI. Mere Natural Light and Reaſon cannot aſſure us *to what Degree* God will pardon thoſe whom he does

§ VI.

forgive. It is evident, that he continues many Old Puniſhments, and ſends New, and ſometimes very ſevere ones, on thoſe that are truly Penitent. This was undeniably the Caſe of *David*, *Wherefore haſt thou deſpiſed the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his ſight? Now therefore the ſword ſhall never depart from thine houſe, becauſe thou haſt deſpiſed me*, &c. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Behold, I will raiſe up evil againſt thee out of thine own houſe*, &c.

2 Sam. 12, 9, 10, 11.

And *Death* at laſt ſeizes them, as well as the reſt of Mankind, which is generally looked upon as the ſtanding Mark of God's Diſpleaſure againſt Sin. And how can mere Reaſon aſſure me, that that ſhall put a final Period to all my Miſeries, that there are not ſome very ſevere Penalties yet behind for me to endure in the other World? The Generality of men have trembled at the thoughts and

and fears of *future* Vengeance. *Lucretius* * himſelf repreſents a guilty Mind as very jealous that Death was not the End of Miſery, but the Beginning of greater Evils. And therefore among other Replies which the great Patron of meer Natural Religion makes to thoſe who might object, that Repentance was no Satisfaction to Divine Juſtice, this is one; *If any* † *further Puniſhment ought to be inflicted, God may inflict it on Sinners for a ſhorter or a longer time after this Life.* Such a Notion as this is, did obtain among the Heathen, as is ac-

* —At mens ſibi conſcia facti
Præmetuens adhibet ſtimulos terretque flagellis,
Nec videt interea, qui terminus eſſe malorum
Poſſit, nec qui ſit pœnarum denique finis;
Atque eadem metuit magis hæc ne in morte graveſcant. *Lucret.*

† —— Si ulterior aliqua irrogari debeat pœna, Deum Summum poſt hanc vitam, ad tempus aliquod breve, vel etiam diuturnum, Supplicium de peccatoribus Sumere poſſe. *Herbert de Relig. Gentil. p.* 199.

knowledged

knowledged by their *Advocate* *, and is too plain to be denied.

Were it not for Scripture, *Purgatory* would not ſeem to be an abſurd Doctrine; The Imperfection of Good mens Repentance, would incline one to ſuſpect, that after this Life, they might be caſt into the Fire again, for the further burning up that Droſs that ſtill adheres to them. (But of this, more in the next Chapter.) And I do not yet ſee, but that, if the Scriptures be laid aſide, I may as well argue from the *Inſtances of God's Severity in this Life, and from the undergoing a very painful Death*, and ſometimes a bloody, cruel and untimely one, *which is the lot of many true Penitents*, as well as others, That God *does not, and will not, pardon men, tho' they do Repent*; As another may argue from the Inſtances of his Com-

* Id. p. 196. it. 208.

mon

mon Bounty and Kindneſs to Wicked men, That he will pardon them, if they do.

Moreover, by the Light of Nature we can't attain to a well-grounded Confidence, that if God ſhould turn away his Wrath from us, he will, beſides this, receive us into the Arms and Embraces of his Love; become a Friend, as well as ceaſe to be an Enemy; not only refrain from Chaſtizing, but alſo feaſt a Returning Prodigal; beſides the laying of the Storm, cauſe the Sun to ſhine, and *lift up the light* of his holy *Countenance* on our Souls, and bleſs us with a ſenſe of his *Loving-kindneſs, which is better than Life.* Tho' *David* was ſo far reconciled to *Abſalom* as not to Execute him, yea to permit him to return to *Jeruſalem*, yet for a long time he would not Suffer him to ſee his Face.

But

But here Revelation doth thoroughly deliver us from all our Melancholy Fears: For it aſſures us, that tho' God continue Old Afflictions, or lay New ones on thoſe whom he forgives, yet 'tis only for their Spiritual and Eternal Advantage, to purge out their Corruptions, to exerciſe and improve their Graces. That all the Strokes he gives them are like thoſe of a Statuary on his ill-ſhaped Marble, to bring them into a beautiful Image and Form, and ſo make them more meet to grace and adorn the Heavenly Building which they are deſigned for. That they ſhall never be in Heavineſs, unleſs there be a Neceſſity for it. That God will remember their Frame and his own Promiſe, and therefore never ſuffer them *to be tempted above what they are able to bear*; as a Gardener by his Glaſſes defends his young and tender Plants from thoſe rough and

and cold Winds which they can't well endure. And if our Danger be *Extraordinary*, ſo ſhall his Aſſiſtance alſo be. When the Jews *gnaſht* on St. *Stephen with their Teeth*, and were ready to devour him, the *Heavens were open'd*, and he ſaw Chriſt *Standing* at the right hand of God. In all other places of the New Teſtament he is repreſented as *Sitting* there. How comes he at this time to be ſeen in a different Poſture? St. *Stephen* was now in very great Danger. And ſo great was our Saviour's Concern for him on this account, that, as if the Throne of Glory had now been uneaſy to him, he *riſes up*, and is ſeen *ſtanding* at the right hand of his Father, that he might be in a greater readineſs to afford that Help to his diſtreſſed Servant, which his preſent Circumſtances did ſo loudly call for. The Scripture tells us, That *tho' he viſit their Iniquities with a Rod*,

Act. 7. 56.

Pſal. 89. 32.

a Rod, and their Tranſgreſſions with a Stripe, yet his Loving-kindneſs he will never take away from them. That if it be not apparently their own Fault,
Joh. 14. 21. he will *manifeſt himſelf* to them, and fill them with that *Peace which paſſeth*
Phil. 4. 7. *all Underſtanding.* And there have been many in all Ages who have practiſed upon and lived up to the Principles of Chriſtianity, and in ſo doing have found this to be true by a long and comfortable Experience: Yea, not a few have fed on this Heavenly Manna, that once were ſome of the Chiefeſt of Sinners, who, when they were firſt awaken'd, have lain under dreadful Agonies of Conſcience, and, one would have thought, even after their ſincere Converſion, ſhould have gone drooping and mourning all their days to their very Graves. Indeed a conſtant lively Senſe of their paſt Sins hath continued engraven on their Spirits, but yet they have

have been freed from that Diſtreſs and Terror of Soul which once they laboured under. As the *Print* of the Nails and Spear remained in our Saviour's Hands and Side, (for unbelieving *Thomas* put his Finger into 'em) but not with that Anguiſh and Torment which they cauſed in him when he hung upon the Croſs. Yea, *walking according to Rule, Peace*, according to the Promiſe, hath been upon them, and they have been fill'd with Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory. And if it hath not been thus with others, 'tis not the fault of Chriſtianity, but of the Profeſſors of it. Gal. 6. 16.

CHAP.

Chap. II.

Of a Future State of Bliſs.

THis is what no Wiſe and Thinking Man, but muſt be deeply concerned about, and cannot chuſe but be very uneaſy in his own Mind if he has not ſome clear Account of it, which he may ſecurely depend upon. For,

We are *capable* of ſubſiſting in another State, and of being either very happy, or very miſerable in it, if God ſo pleaſe. There can be no rational Doubt of this, but that the ſame Almighty Power and Providence, which brought us into, and hath kept us in this World ſo long, ſometimes Comforting, and at other times Afflicting us, can do the

the like in the next, and that in much higher Degrees, and to all Eternity if he pleaſe. And,

As *Reaſonable Creatures*, we have a Proſpect of, and a Concern for, Futurity. It is the Privilege of our Natures, that we can move this way or that, ſtep back in our own Thoughts to what is paſt, and forward alſo to what is yet to come. And every Wiſe man will be frequently looking before him, often thinking what is like to be his State hereafter.

And in all Ages *all Sorts of Men*, as far as we Certainly know, in all Nations, tho' never ſo Ignorant and Brutiſh, Wicked and Barbarous, oppoſite to or remote from each other, have agreed in this, tho' in a very few things beſides, *viz.* A Perſuaſion that there is a Future State of Happineſs and Miſery. Whether this was the Effect of Tradition, or

the Concluſion of their own Reaſon, or whether it was derived down to us, together with our Being from our Firſt Parents, the Notion of it being *engraven* on them with a Divine Hand, and we taking the *Impreſſion*, being wrought off from them; I ſhall not now diſpute. The matter of Fact is certain, and that's ſufficient to make any Man deeply concern'd about it, ſeeing 'tis the Common Senſe of all Mankind; and that ſo much the rather, becauſe,

As *Lovers of our Selves*, we cannot chuſe, but earneſtly deſire to enjoy the one and avoid the other. And yet,

As *Sinners*, we cannot but know our ſelves to be unworthy of the Former, and very Liable to the Latter. And therefore Certainty in this matter is deſirable on that Account: As alſo,

Becauſe of its mighty Influence upon our *Conduct* here in this World.

If

If there be no other Life but this, it would be our Prudence to make as much of it as we can, without any great Strictness and Nicety, because it is our All. *Xenophon* * brings in *Cyrus*, when hastening to his End, after he had spoken of his Soul's subsisting and being happy after Death,

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* Ἐι μὲν οὖν οὕτως ἔχει ταῦτα, ὥσπερ ἐγὼ οἴομαι, καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καταλείπει τὸ σῶμα, καὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν καταιδούμενοι, ποιεῖτε ἃ ἐγὼ δέομαι. Ἐι δὲ μὴ οὕτως, ἀλλὰ μένουσα ἡ ψυχὴ ἐν τῷ σώματι συναποθνήσκει, ἀλλὰ Θεούς γε τοὺς αἰεὶ ὄντας καὶ παντ' ἐφορῶντας, καὶ πάντα δυναμένους, οἱ καὶ τὴν τῶν ὅλων τήνδε τάξιν συνέχουσιν ἀτριβῆ καὶ ἀγήρατον καὶ ἀναμάρτητον, καὶ ὑπὸ κάλλους καὶ μεγέθους ἀδιήγητον, τούτους φοβούμενοι μήτε ἀσεβὲς μηδὲν, μήδε ἀνόσιον μήτε ποιήσητε, μήτε βουλεύσητε. Xenoph. Opera. Edit. Paris. p. 237. *This Passage, together with the foregoing Parts of his Speech that introduce it,* Tully *thus imperfectly translates:* Apud Xenophontem autem moriens Cyrus Major hæc dicit, Nolite arbitrari, O mihi charissimi Filii, me cùm à vobis discessero nusquam aut nullum fore, &c. —— Quare si hæc ita sunt, sic me colitote ut Deum: Sin unà est interiturus animus cum corpore, vos tamen Deos verentes, qui hanc omnem pulchritudinem tuentur & regunt, memoriam nostri piè inviolateque servabitis. *Tully de Senectute, Edit. Schrevelii, p.* 1264.

yet ſaying, *If theſe things are ſo, as I do think, then reverencing my Soul follow my Advice: But if they are not ſo, but the Soul dies with the Body, Yet however reverence the Gods.* Methinks the Speech is as *weak* as the Man; and there is no more of Force or Authority in the Words, than of Majeſty in the dying King that uttered them. The Generality of Men will be ſtrongly tempted to think, there is much more Senſe in that Epicurean Saying, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die*, and drop into the void and empty Space where things unborn do lie.

But if there be another State, we muſt walk by other Rules and Meaſures. And how ſhall we apply our Selves to the Uſe of Means, when we are at a loſs about the End? How can the Mariner ſteer his Veſſel ſo as to gain his Port, in a cloudy Seaſon, when he can ſee neither Sun, Moon, nor Stars? Aſſu-

Aſſurance in this matter is alſo requiſite for our Support and *Comfort* in this life. * It is the vain Imagination of a modern Poetick Philoſopher, that the Face of the Primitive Ante-Diluvian Earth was ſmooth, regular and uniform, and the whole Year was nothing but one Perpetual Spring without any Rain. We are ſure there hath been no ſuch Golden Age ſince the Memory of Man. Spring and Autumn, Summer and Winter, Sunſhine and Clouds, Fair Weather and Foul divide our Year; and the Earth, ſince the Flood, is very uneven, and broken in many places; an exact Emblem of the State of thoſe who dwell upon it. We are *born to Troubles, as the Sparks fly upward*; and may ſpeedily be in ſuch deplorable Circumſtances, that we can have nothing to fetch any Job 5. 7.

* Burnet's *Theory of the Earth.* Archæolog. Part II. Ch. V.

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* Burnet's *Theory of the Earth.* Archæolog. Part II. Ch. V.

Relief from, unleſs we can draw it down from Heaven. We *may* die in a few Moments, and *muſt* within the compaſs of a few Years: And it will be very diſmal in ſuch an Hour, for a Man to feel himſelf dropping in the Dark, and not know where it is that he is like to fall.

Laſtly, The more Holy and Serious Men are, the more Inquiſitive be they about, the more Deſirous of, a future State of Bliſs. The Notions of it which are impreſs'd on their Minds, are more freſh and quick according to Mens Improvement in Piety; like Letters that are cut in the Bark of a young Tree; as that grows bigger, ſo do they grow larger and fairer every day. 'Tis with Holy Souls as with Men at Sea, the violent Agitations of the ſtormy Element, wherein they Sail, make them Sick and Weary of this preſent Poſture of Affairs, and earneſtly long

to

to be in a better and more ſettled Place. It is not more natural for a Seed, when it is quickened, to cleave its way through the Clods of the Earth, and lift up its head into the free and open Air; than it is for the good Principle, proportionably to its Increaſe in the Soul, to ſhoot up in fervent Deſires and Breathings after the Heavenly State. Upon all theſe Conſiderations, a ſatisfactory Account of it cannot but be very deſirable. And tho' a ſenſeleſs *Logg* may, yet a Conſidering Man cannot be carried down the ſwift and haſty Stream, without many Thoughts, Whither am I going? And how is it like to be with me in that other World, to which I am making ſuch viſible and daily Approaches?

But now if we caſt away our Bibles, we throw our *Compaſs* overboard. For,

§. I. I. Meer Natural Light and Reaſon cannot give us a full *Aſſurance* that there *is a Future State of Bliſs*. About this the Heathens, who wanted Divine Revelation, were at a very great Loſs. They had ſuch a Notion among them, ſome Glimmering Apprehenſions of it; they inclined to it as a Probable Opinion, and wiſh'd it were true; but could not be very Confident of it.

I grant indeed, as Learned Men have well obſerved, that the *Later* * *Platoniſts* of the Sacred Succeſſion, out of the School of *Ammonius*, have written with another Air, and in a much higher Strain of this as well as ſome other important Subjects, than thoſe that went before them. But 'tis not unknown at what Fire they lighted their Tapers. They ſuddenly grew rich by the Spoils they

* *Stillingfleet's* Orig. Sac. p. 500.

had

had gotten out of the Holy Scriptures, which yet they had not the Honeſty to own they had taken thence: But diſguiſed their Notions by giving them a peculiar Turn, that it might be thought, what they had tranſplanted from the Sacred Writings, did Originally grow in their own Gardens.

And I do not deny but that *ſometimes* the Older Philoſophers expreſs themſelves with ſome Briskneſs and Confidence. But then they *aſſert*, and do not ſolidly *prove* it; and we have little reaſon to believe them, becauſe at other times 'tis plain they did hardly believe *themſelves* in what they ſaid. They have betrayed a great Doubtfulneſs of Mind about it, and that in ſuch a Seaſon, when they moſt of all needed a firm Perſuaſion of it as a warm Cordial at their Hearts; in the midſt of Troubles and Dangers, and when they were

were on the Confines of the Grave: *Let my Fellow-Souldiers Congratulate me when I am dead,* (as *Xenophon* brings in *Cyrus*, ſpeaking in his laſt Moments) *becauſe* * *then I ſhall be in ſafety, and nothing can hurt me, whether I ſhall be with God, or be reduced to Nothing*: But which of theſe two ſhould be his Caſe, was Somewhat of a Doubt with him.

I cannot but pity the Diſtreſs of Soul that *Socrates* muſt needs be in for this very reaſon, when he was on the Point of Martyrdom for the Unity of the God-Head. Tho', by the way, he was but a ſorry Martyr for it, who in Priſon aſſerted a † Plurality of Gods, and with his dying Breath

* Πέρσας μέντοι πάντας, καὶ τοὺς συμμάχους, ἐπὶ τὸ μνῆμα τ᾽ ἐμὸν παρακαλεῖτε, συνησθησομένους ἐμοὶ, ὅτι ἐν τῷ ἀσφαλεῖ ἤδη ἔσομαι, ὡς μηδὲν ἂν ἔτι κακὸν παθεῖν, μήτε ἢν μετὰ τοῦ θείου γένωμαι, μήτε ἢν μηδὲν ἔτι ᾦ. Xenoph. Κύρου παιδ. inter opera, p. 238.

† Plato Apol. Socr. p. 27.

order'd

order'd his Friend to offer for him a * Cock to *Æſculapius*; and ſo the *laſt* thing that he did, was to diſown that Fundamental of all Religion for which 'tis pretended that he ſuffer'd. And as he was thus divided in his own Mind about the *One* God, ſo was he no leſs about the *Future State*. The very laſt words which *Plato* makes him ſpeak to his intimate Friends in his Apology, are theſe: *I muſt ſpeedily die, but you ſhall continue to live; but who ſhall be in better Circumſtances in a little while, You or I, is uncertain to every one but to God † alone.* *Tully* indeed doth endeavour to fetch him off: *For*, ſaith he, *that which he ſaith no one knows but the Gods alone with whom it ſhould be better, he himſelf knew; for he had ſaid it before*: Refer-

* Plato's Phœdo, p. 118. Edit. Serrani.

† Apolog. p. 42.

ring

ring to that * Paſſage of *Socrates* which he had newly quoted, *I have great hopes that it will go well with me*, &c. (of which more preſently), *but he ſtill to the laſt obſerves his uſual way of affirming nothing.* The ſame do thoſe two Learned Men, † *Serranus* and ‖ *Huetius*, offer in his behalf; and that he doth herein no more than what he ought, having ſet up for the firſt Author of Doubting and Queſtioning every thing; and ſo doth but maintain the Character which he had aſſumed; and doth only accommodate himſelf to the Opinion of others, and the Hypotheſis of the Vulgar with whom he had to do; but that otherwiſe there was nothing

* Quod præter Deos negat ſcire quenquam, id ſcit ipſe, utrum melius ſit. Nam dixit ante: Sed ſuum illud nihil ut affirmet, tenet ad extremum. *Tuſc. Quæſt. l.* 1. *p.* 1063.

† In notis ad Apolog. Socratis, p. 41.

‖ Concordia Rationis & Fidei, p. 156.

which

which he was more confident of. But this is but a very lame Excuse for him. I grant indeed he doth several times say that he doth strongly hope he shall *go to the* * *Gods*, and to the *Seat of the Blessed*, &c. But then he saith no more concerning Himself than he doth concerning the SWANS: *For*, saith he, *when They are sensible that they must die*, as they *sang before*, *they then do it more than ever*, *rejoicing that they are a going to that God* † *whose Servants they are*. Now in spight of the *Oracle*, we may venture to say, That he who talks of going to God in no other Sense than a *dying Bird* doth, is not a very *Wise*

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* Apolog. p. 40. Phœdo, p. 63. it. p. 80, 81. it. p. 115. *See this also in* Tully. Tus. Qu. l. 1. p. 1066.

† Τῶν Κύκνων δοκῶ φαυλότερος ὑμῖν εἶναι τὴν μαντικὴν, οἳ ἐπειδὰν αἴσθωνται ὅτι δεῖ αὐτοὺς ἀποθανεῖν, ἄδοντες καὶ ἐν τῷ πρόσθεν χρόνῳ, τότε δὴ πλεῖστα καὶ μάλιστα ἄδουσι, γεγηθότες ὅτι μέλλουσι παρὰ τὸν Θεὸν ἀπιέναι, οὗπέρ εἰσι θεράποντες. Plato's Phœdo, p. 84, 85.

and

and Knowing man, nor like to be a very Happy one. But he further adds, That *Dying* * *Swans do ſing, becauſe they belong to* Apollo; *and having a ſort of Prophetick Inſtinct, they fore-ſee the good things of the Future State, and thereupon they are far better pleaſed with their laſt Day, than with any whatſoever in the fore-going part of their Lives. And I reckon my ſelf a Fellow-Servant with theſe Creatures, and to be Conſecrated to the ſame God which they are dedicated unto; and that I have not leſs of a Spirit of Divination than they, communicated to me from him our Common Maſter, and that I ſhall not depart this Life in a more Melancholy manner than they do.* I think the God, the

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* Ἅτε (viz. κύκνοι) οἶμαι, τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι ὄντες μαντικοί τε εἰσὶ, καὶ προειδότες τὰ ἐν ᾅδου ἀγαθὰ, ἄδουσί τε καὶ τέρπονται ἐπείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ διαφερόντως ἢ ἐν τῷ πρόσθεν χρόνῳ. Ἐγὼ δὲ αὐτὸς ἡγοῦμαι ὁμόδουλός γε εἶναι τῶν Κύκνων, καὶ ἱερὸς τοῦ αὐτοῦ Θεοῦ· καὶ οὐ χεῖρον ἐκείνων τῇ μαντικῇ ἔχειν παρὰ τοῦ δεσπότου, οὐδὲ δυσθυμότερον αὐτῶν τὸν βίον ἀπαλλάξειν. Id. p. 85.

Birds

Birds and the *Philoſopher*, are all *of a Feather*, and very well match'd.

But beſides this, he doth at every turn put in ſo many *cold* and *qualifying* Paſſages, as plainly ſhew he was like a Blind man, that gropes and feels out his way, and moves with great Fear, not knowing where his next Step ſhall be: *For*, ſaith he, *to fear Death is nothing elſe but for a man to ſeem to be Wiſe, when he is not really ſo: For* no man * *KNOWS but that it MAY be to him the greateſt Good.* But then it *may* be the greateſt *Evil* for ought any one can tell; and the way to cure Men of this Fear, had been roundly to have aſſerted, and ſolidly to have proved, but that was more than he could do, that Death will be to them very great Gain and Advantage. And preſently after he adds: *In this I differ from many; and*

* Apolog. p. 29.

if

if in any thing I would affirm * *my ſelf to be Wiſer than the reſt of Mankind, it ſhould be in this, That as I do* not well underſtand the things which belong to the Future Inviſible State, *ſo I am ſenſible that I* don't know *them. But this I do certainly know, that to injure and rebel againſt any that is our Superiour, whether it be God or Man, is a piece of very great Wickedneſs. But as for thoſe things which I do not* know *whether they are Good or Evil, I will never fear or avoid them, rather than thoſe things which I do* certainly know *to be Evil.* Where we plainly ſee, that notwithſtanding his Sceptical Humour in which he did greatly delight and indulge himſelf, yet ſome things he did *certainly know*, and they are contra-diſtinguiſh'd from what he was not aſſured of, and which are the things re-

* Ib.

lating

lating to the *Future State*. The ſame we may obſerve in another Place. *What* (ſaith he) *would any one have me in a ſneaking manner from a fear of that Puniſhment which* Melitus *would fain bring me to* (viz. Death) *which I profeſs that I do* not know *whether it be* * *Good or Evil for me; to chuſe that which I do* certainly know *to be Evil?* meaning thereby a Voluntary Submiſſion to a Perpetual Impriſonment, Baniſhment, or a Fine, which would have been a tacit Acknowledgment of his Guilt. Again, a little after, (ſaith he) *I have great Hopes that Death will be Gain to me: For one of theſe two things will follow upon it, either that then a man will have no* † manner of Senſe *of any thing at all*, or elſe, *as it is SAID, he will be*

* Id. p. 37.

† Id. p. 40. *See this alſo tranſlated by* Tully. Tuſc. Quæſt. p. 1063.

tranſlated into another Place. And yet once more in the ſelf-ſame Page, IF *to dye, be to go to another Place, and the things* which are reported are true, *that all who have departed this Life are there, what greater Good can there be?* To which having ſpoken ſomewhat of the Condition of Good men after Death, he adds theſe very remarkable words, *If theſe things are true* *, *i. e.* if I were ſure they were ſo, *I would willingly dye over and over.* Again, ſaith he, *I* hope *to go to Good men, tho' I will not* boldly affirm *it. But that I ſhall go to the Gods Lords who are very good, if I would confidently aver* any thing in matters of this nature, *this ſhould be it.* After this

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* Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν πολλάκις ἐθέλω τεθνάναι, εἰ ταῦτά ἐστιν ἀληθῆ. Apolog. Socr. p. 41.

† Νῦν δ' εὖ ἴσθ' ὅτι παρ' ἄνδρας τε ἐλπίζω ἀφίξεσθαι ἀγαθούς. Καὶ τοῦτο μὲν οὐκ ἂν πάνυ διισχυρισαίμην. Ὅτι μέντοι τοὺς θεοὺς δεσπότας πάνυ ἀγαθοὺς ἥξειν, εὖ ἴσθ' ὅτι, εἴπερ τι ἄλλο τοιοῦτον, διισχυρισαίμην ἂν ἔγωγε. Plato's Phœdo, p. 63.

Plato

Plato brings in his Friend *Simmias* replying thus upon him, *I am of the ſame mind with you,* * *O* Socrates, *that 'tis altogether Impoſſible, or at leaſt exceeding Difficult to arrive at any Certainty in theſe Matters, while we are in this Life. ----And therefore we muſt diligently do one of theſe two things, Either learn from others, or find out by beating our own Brains, how theſe matters are: Or if this be Impoſſible to be done, then take up with the beſt of Humane Accounts, and leaſt liable to be confuted, that is to be had, that by the Help thereof as by a Veſſel we may ſail through*

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* Ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες, περὶ μὲν πολλῶν ἴσως ὥσπερ καὶ σὺ· τὸ μὲν σαφὲς εἰδέναι ἐν τῷ νῦν βίῳ ἢ ἀδύνατον εἶδ, ἢ παραπλήσιόν τι —— Δεῖν δὲ περὶ ταῦτα ἓν γέ τι τούτων διαπεράναι, ἢ μαθεῖν ὅτι ἔχει, ἢ εὑρεῖν· ἢ εἰ ταῦτα ἀδύνατον, τὸ γ' ἂν βέλτιστον τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων λόγων λαβόντα, καὶ δυσεξελεγκτότατον, ἐπὶ τούτου ὀχούμενον, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ σχεδίας, κινδυνεύοντα διαπλεῦσαι τὸν βίον· εἰ μή τις δύναιτο ἀσφαλέστερον καὶ ἀκινδυνότερον, ἐπὶ βεβαιοτέρου ὀχήματος ἢ λόγου θείου τινὸς διαπορευθῆναι. Plato's Phœdo, p. 85.

the Dangers and Difficulties of this preſent Life; unleſs a man can get a better and a Safer means of Conveyance, and that is a DIVINE WORD. After this *Socrates* addreſſing himſelf to prove the Immortality of the Soul, and the Future State, uſhers in his Proofs with a long Preface, telling his Friends, his chief Deſign was to *perſwade himſelf* of their Truth. But it ſeems it was more than he could do. For, among others, he hath theſe words: **IF THE THINGS WHICH I SAY ARE TRUE, 'tis good to be perſwaded of them: But if nothing of a man doth remain after he is dead, nevertheleſs this little time which I have to live will be the more pleaſant: And after Death, it will be no diſadvantage to me.*

* Phœdo, p. 91.

Upon

Upon this he endeavours to prove the Point as well as he could; and then, for want of better matter, at large relates ſome of the *Poetical Dreams* about the Future State; and thereupon concludes, as well he might, that it doth not *become a man of Senſe to aver, that what he hath reported is true*, &c.

Had not *Socrates* been really at a great Plunge, *Plato* would never have ſo far tranſgreſs'd the Rules of Decency which he well underſtood, and at other times was wont to obſerve, as at every Turn to bring him in thus Heſitating and Doubting: Eſpecially conſidering the *Weight* of the Subject, and the *Circumſtances* of his Maſter, who now lay under the Sentence of Death. And a Learned and Dying Man makes but an Odd Figure when he is brought in Dropping *ſo many* Suſpicious Words about the Future State, if he really be clear in

his own Mind about it. It looks more like Diſtruſt and Fear, than Humility and Modeſty. And of all Men it was moſt intolerable in *Socrates*, who from an irkſome Senſe of the miſerable Uncertainty and Uſeleſneſs of other parts of Learning, ſet up for a *Reformer* of Philoſophy, and was altogether for *Ethicks*, correcting the Manners of Men, and promoting good Living in the World, the great Encouragement whereunto is a Future Reward. For even Vertue it ſelf, as *Fair* as it is, like other *Beauties*, is not like to be warmly Courted by many, if it have no Dowry. Add to all this, That he was not now talking to the Rabble, but diſcourſing with his Intimate, Learned and Philoſophical Friends, with whom he ſhould have dealt more openly and freely; and that ſo much the rather, becauſe all along they are brought in as much unſatisfied in their

their own Minds. From all which Conſiderations 'tis evident, tho' he talked much, yet he knew but little of the matter. And even for that alſo, 'tis not unlikely that he was beholden to others. He (as well as they that ſucceeded him) reſembled the New Moon, the far greateſt part of whoſe Face is cover'd with Darkneſs; and the ſmall remainder which is not ſo, ſhines with but a faint, pale, yea and a borrowed Light too.

If any one ſhall ſay, that *Plato* uſed an unaccountable Liberty in mingling ſo much of his own Sentiments with the Speeches of *Socrates*, that like an interpolated Book, 'tis hard to know what was his own, and what belonged to his Maſter; I ſhall not deny it: Becauſe I find, that, when *Socrates* himſelf heard him once repeat his * *Lyſis*, he cried out,

* Diog. Laert. in vitâ Platonis, p. 207, 208. Edit. Colon. Anno 1616.

How many things doth this Young man feign me to ſpeak? For (ſaith *Laertius*) *he had written not a few things in the Perſon of his Maſter, which he never ſaid.* But it will ſerve my Turn altogether as well, whether it be the One or the Other. Either the Wiſe *Socrates* or the Divine *Plato*, or rather both of them, did float up and down like an unſteady Veſſel in the Sea, that is toſs'd this way and that; they wander'd in an Endleſs Maze of wild Gueſſes and Conjectures at Random.

That Paſſage in *Tully* * is very obſervable, who having ſpoken of thoſe little Philoſophers, who affirmed that Death was the total deſtruction of

* --- Se cùm tempus mortis veniſſet, totos perituros. — Nec tamen mihi ſanè quidquam occurrit, cur non Pythagoræ ſit & Platonis vera Sententia. Ut enim rationem Plato nullam afferret (vide quid homini tribuam) ipsâ Auctoritate me frangeret. Tot autem rationes attulit, ut velle cæteris, ſibi certè perſuaſiſſe videatur. *Tuſc. Quæſt. l.* 1. *p.* 1057.

the

the *whole* Man, adds, *Nothing doth occur to me to make me think the (contrary) Opinion of* Pythagoras *and* Plato *is not true: For tho'* Plato *ſhould produce no Reaſon at all (ſee what Deference I pay to the Man) his Authority would quite bear me down. But he hath produced ſo many Reaſons, that he ſeems* Willing *to perſuade others,* however doubtleſs to *perſuade himſelf.* So that in his Opinion he was little better than a Well-wiſher to the Cauſe. Let's ſee whether He himſelf can do better. He had as ſharp an Eye as moſt Men ever had; and yet he introduces his Diſcourſe on this Argument with words to this effect: *I am not going to utter* * *Oracles nor give Demonſtrations, but inconſiderable Man that I am among many others, I will give you my Gueſs as to what is likely: For I can go*

* *Tuſc. Quæſt. l.* 1. *p.* 1053. --- Explicabo, nec tamen ut Pythius Apollo, certa ut ſint & fixa quæ dixero, &c.

no further than Probabilities. Let thoſe talk of Certainties who profeſs themſelves to be Wiſe. Then he reckons up the ſeveral Opinions of the Philoſophers: *Some think the Soul is extinguiſh'd with the Body, others that 'tis preſently diſſipated after it hath taken its leave of the Carkaſe, others that it remains in being a long while, and others that it laſteth always,* &c. *Now* (ſaith he) *God knows which of theſe Opinions is true; and which of them is moſt probable is a great Queſtion.* And afterwards having rejected the Opinion of *Dicæarchus*, * that *the Soul is nothing at all*, ſaith he, *the Opinions of the reſt give us HOPE (if this be pleaſing to you) that it is POSSIBLE that Souls when they depart from their Bodies may go to Heaven as to their own Houſe.* To this his Friend, who diſcourſes with him, replies: *I am very deſirous it ſhould be*

* Id. p. 1054.

ſo; and if it be not, yet I would fain be perſuaded of it. And upon the recommending *Plato*'s Treatiſe of the Soul to him, his Friend replies: *I aſſent to what he ſays,* * *I know not how, while I am reading it: But when I have laid the Book aſide, and I begin to think with my ſelf of the Soul's Immortality, all my Aſſent to it ſlides away from me.* Indeed the Arguments which *Plato* brings on this Occaſion, and which *Tully* hath but too much honoured by tranſcribing from him, are almoſt all of them ſo weak and trifling, that I wonder how *Cleombrotus*, when he heard him diſcourſing on that Subject, could be induced to leap from him into the Sea, that he might preſently be in the other State. Had I been his Hearer, unleſs he could have produced ſtronger Proofs, and given a better Account of the

* Tuſc. Qu. l. 1. p. 1054.

matter

matter than he hath done in his Dialogue of the Soul, I ſhould much rather have thrown *Him* than *myſelf* over-board, and have ſent him into the other World, that ſo he might thoroughly have informed himſelf about the Subject he pretended to treat, but was ſo far from being a Maſter of. He talks ſo weakly on this Head, that I think no man but one who is *Non compos mentis*, would ever have brought in poor *Cleombrotus* as a *Felo de ſe* for Drowning himſelf.

And in another place *Tully* brings in *Cato* after a long Diſcourſe on this Subject, winding up the whole in theſe Words: * *If it be an Error that the Souls of Men are Immortal, I am pleaſed to err, and I will never, as long as I live, be beaten out of it: But if when I am dead (as ſome little Philoſo-*

* De Senectute *at the end*, p. 1265.

phers

phers think) I ſhall perceive Nothing; I am not afraid, leſt the Philoſophers who are dead, ſhould deride this Error of mine: But if we are not Immortal, yet it is deſirable for a Man in his proper time to be extinguiſh'd. This cannot be excuſed by a Pretence that *Tully* ſpeaks it not in his own Perſon, but in *Cato*'s: And that when a Man doth perſonate another, he muſt ſpeak agreeably to his Character, tho' it be never ſo contrary to his own real Sentiments. For he himſelf tells us in * another place, that he *brings in* Cato *diſputing of Old Age, becauſe he did not know a fitter Perſon*; and that *this manner of Writing in the borrowed Perſon of Ancient and Illuſtrious Men hath, he knows not how, more of Weight in it. And therefore*, ſaith he, *when I read my* OWN *Writings, I am ſometimes ſo affected with them, as tho' they were not*

* De Amicitiâ *in the beginning*, p. 1265.

my

my Sayings, but really Cato's. So that under the Covert of another's Name, he plainly writes his own Opinion. And a little after in the ſame Book, having ſpoken of the ſpeedy Return of the departed Souls of very Excellent Men to Heaven, he can't forbear adding: *IF* * *this be ſo, then* Scipio's *Soul to be ſure is got thither: But IF it be* TRUER, *that Body and Soul do utterly periſh together, and there be no remaining Senſe at all; then as there is no Good in Death, ſo there is no Evil in it.*

Seneca, when he was dangerouſly Sick, labours to Comfort himſelf againſt the Fears of his Diſſolution with this ſorry Conſideration, That *Death*

* Id ſi ita eſt, ut optimi cujuſque animus in morte facillime evolet, &c. Sin autem illa veriora, ut idem interitus ſit animorum & corporum, nec ullus Senſus maneat, ut nihil boni eſt in morte, ſic certè nihil mali. *Id. p.* 1267.

would

* *would put him into the ſame Condition he was in ere he was born; that Men are like a Candle, which is in no worſe State after 'tis put out than before it was lighted.* At another time, ſaith he, *I was pleaſed in enquiring into the Soul's Eternity* †, *or rather to Believe it: For I did eaſily believe the Opinions of Great Men, who were better at promiſing what was very grateful to me, than at proving it.* When he would comfort ‖ *Marcia* for the Loſs of her dear Son, ſaith he, *That may be Good or Evil that is Something; but that which is Nothing, and reduceth all things into Nothing, delivers us up to no Fortune; nor can he be Miſerable who no longer is at all.* And again upon the ſame Occaſion, ſaith he to another, *It may be he* * *is gone before; IF what Wiſe men have ſaid, be true, and*

* Ep. 54.
† Ep. 102.
‖ Ad Marciam, Ch. 19.
* Epiſt. 63. *the laſt words.*

there

there be a Place to receive us after Death. But this is poor Conſolation, *cold as the Grave* wherein a man's Friend is laid. *Plutarch* ſpeaks no more confidently when he endeavours to comfort * *Apollonius* upon the untimely Death of his very promiſing Son; he adopts that Saying of *Socrates*, That Death is like a deep Sleep, or a long Travelling into a foreign Country, or elſe 'tis a total Deſtruction of Body and Soul; and ſpeaks to the *laſt* as well as the two other, that he may demonſtrate Death to be no Evil. This was one of the Ingredients he uſes to make a Plaiſter to heal the Sore of his diſtreſſed Friend. And the beſt that he could ſay was, *IF the Saying of the Ancient Poets and Philoſophers be* true †, *as 'tis* Probable *that it is, that Good men are ad-*

* Conſol. ad Apol. Edit. Xylandri, p. 109, &c.
† P. 120.

vanced

vanced when they die, and ſome of them, as 'tis reported, *more highly than others; and there be a certain Place appointed for pious Souls in which they live, you have reaſon to hope well concerning your Son that he is got among 'em.*

As for Death, (ſaith * *Antoninus*) *whether it be a Diſſipation of the Elements, or a Reduction into Atoms, or an Annihilation, it is either an Extinction or a Tranſmigration*: Or, as others read it, it is either † a Diſſipation of the Elements, Reſolution into Atoms, Annihilation, Extinction or Tranſmigration. A Saying that much reſembles that of *Seneca* ‖, *Deſpiſe Death, which either ends or tranſlates you.*

He that would ſee more of *Antoninus*'s Uncertainty, let him turn

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* Antoninus, l. 7. §. 32.

† *Gataker* in locum, p. 273.

‖ Contemnite mortem, quæ vos aut finit aut transfert. *Seneca de Provid. ch.* 6.

to the Places * cited in the Margent.

To theſe Philoſophers I will add the famous Hiſtorian † *Tacitus*, who, ſpeaking in very affecting Terms concerning the Death of his Father-in-Law *Agricola*, drops this Paſſage: *IF there be any place for the Ghoſts of Good men; IF, as Wiſe men define, the Souls of Great Perſons die not with the Body, in Peace maiſt thou reſt*, &c.

Of the ſame Strain is the Speech of that noble Roman Lady *Veturia*, a Woman of an admirable Wit and Addreſs, and whoſe Spirit was altogether as great as her Quality; who, among other Arguments with which ſhe diverted her Son *Coriolanus* from ruining his own Country, when it was entirely at his Mercy, makes uſe

* Lib. 3. §. 3. l. 4. §. 14. & 21. l. 6. §. 24. l. 7. §. 50. l. 8. §. 25. & 58. l. 10. §. 58. l. 12. §. 5.

† Vita Agricolæ, ad finem.

of

of this, That if ſhe could but ſucceed in *her* Enterprize of prevailing with him to lay aſide *his*, ſhe ſhould not only gain Immortal Honour here upon Earth, but alſo, *IF there be a place*, ſaith ſhe, * *for the Reception of Humane Souls after they are diſmiſs'd from the Body, mine ſhall go not to a ſubterraneous and dark one, where 'tis SAID that miſerable Wretches are lodg'd, nor to the Plains of* Lethe, *as they are called; but to the High and Pure* Æther, *where 'tis REPORTED that they who are deſcended from the Gods, do lead a bleſſed and happy Life.* I am not without ſome Grounds of Jealouſy, that the Whole of her Speech,

* —— καὶ εἴ τις ἄρα τὰς ἀνθρωπίνας ψυχὰς ἀπολυθείσας τοῦ σώματος ὑποδέξεται τόπος, οὐχ ὁ ταπεινὸς καὶ ἀφεγγὴς ὑποδέξεταί με ἐμοὶ, ἐν ᾧ φασὶν τοὺς κακοδαίμονας οἰκεῖν, οὐδὲ τὸ λεγόμενον ὑπὸ Λήθης πεδίον, ἀλλ' ὁ μεταρσιος καὶ καθαρὸς αἰθὴρ, ἐν ᾧ τοὺς ἐκ θεῶν φύσεως οἰκεῖν λόγος ὑσδαίμονα καὶ μακάριον ἔχοντας βίον. Dionyſ. Halicarn. l. 8. p. 522, 523. Edit. Wichelii.

whereof theſe Words are a part, as 'tis ſet down, was made for her by *Dionyſius*, according to the uſual cuſtom of moſt Hiſtorians, who are wont to put Words into the Mouths of thoſe Perſons whoſe Actions they relate, and don't ſo much tell us what *They* ſpake, as what *Themſelves* would have ſaid, had they been to have made a ſet Oration under the ſame Circumſtances; wherein they frequently over-do, make them talk much finer than it can rationally be ſuppoſed *They* are capable of doing; lay on ſo much *Paint*, that it eaſily appears to an obſerving Eye to be the work of Art, and not of Nature: But be it the Incomparable *Veturia*, or the Grave *Dionyſius*, 'tis not very material. 'Tis evident the Perſon that ſpake, was very doubtful about a Future State.

Now

Now if it were thus with the moſt Learned and Sagacious Men, with the moſt Elevated and Exalted Souls; how ſad in all likelihood muſt it needs be with the Body of Mankind? If they who had got the Higher Ground above the Heads of the Common People, and had the Advantage too of ſtanding on one another's Shoulders, could ſee ſuch a little way before 'em; what ſhall we think of the little Creatures that ſate below? In ſhort, we do not find that Everlaſting Life in the other State was in any Heathen Nation an Article of Religion eſtabliſhed by Law. It was but ſlightly touch'd on by Philoſophers when ever they did name it, which was but ſeldom, as a Motive to excite Men to the Practice of Vertue. Other Arguments they uſe and truſt to, which they did better underſtand; and it is Prudence for a man not to urge thoſe Reaſons which

are ſtrongeſt in themſelves, but rather fight with that Weapon which he is a Maſter of, and knows how beſt to manage. And 'tis a ſhrewd Obſervation of * St. *Auſtin*, That tho' the Heathens had abundance of Gods, to whom they did particularly apply themſelves, to one for one Bleſſing, to another God for another Favour; and therefore the Knowledge of the Gods was neceſſary, that they might direct themſelves to them aright, and not ask Water from the God of Wine, *&c.* Yet *Varro* himſelf, who was very well skill'd in the matter, hath not mentioned ſo much as one God, whom they were to pray unto for Eternal Life.

'Tis true indeed, we who have been taught from our very Infancy by the Goſpel, that there is ſuch a Place as Heaven, and ſo glorious a

* St. *Auguſt.* de Civit. Dei, l. 4. c. 22. l. 6. c. 9.

Reward

Reward for the Righteous in the other State, may be apt to think, that we have hit upon it by the Exerciſe of our own unaſſiſted Reaſon, or that it was very eaſy ſo to have done. But herein it fares with us, as oftentimes it doth with a Studious Man, who having familiarly convers'd with good Authors, doth verily think ſome of thoſe Notions and Expreſſions too which he hath learnt from them, are the genuine Off-ſpring of his own Mind and Thought. Juſt as Corn that ſprings up in ſome places, ſeems to the Husbandman to be the natural Product of the Ground, he having never ſowed it with that ſort of Grain; the Seeds of which, in Reality, were taken up by the Wind from another Field whereto they did originally belong, and inviſibly dropt down there. I can't better expreſs my Senſe of this than in the Words of a modern Author, who herein

ſpeaks very well, tho' judging by the main Deſign of his Book, I take him to be a very *Singular Unitarian*, ſeeing he cuts off all the neceſſary Articles of our Faith, excepting that of *the Belief of Jeſus to be the Meſſiah*; tho' I charitably hope he doth not ſet Chriſtianity on *one ſingle Foot*, that it may be the more eaſily puſhed down. * *When Truths are known to us*, ſaith he, *we are apt to be favourable to our own Parts; and aſcribe to our own Underſtandings the Diſcovery of what in Truth we borrowed from others: ---- and Truths which we are now ſatisfied of, we conclude our own Faculties would have led us into without any Aſſiſtance.---- A great many things we have been bred up in the Belief of, from our Cradles, (and are Notions grown Familiar, and as it were Natural to us under*

* Reaſonab. of Chriſtianity, *p.* 276, 277, 278.

the

the Goſpel) we take for unqueſtionable obvious Truths, and eaſily demonſtrable, without conſidering how long we might have been in Doubt or Ignorance of them, had Revelation been ſilent: And many are beholden to Revelation who do not acknowledge it. But Revelation is little beholden to ſuch ungrateful Creatures, how much ſoever they may be to it.

If we lay that aſide, I do not ſee how a Man can be *fully ſatisfied* concerning a Future State of *Bliſs*. We may indeed, by the Light of Nature and Reaſon, be ſure that there is a State of Future *Puniſhments*, becauſe of the great and almoſt uninterrupted Proſperity of many wicked Men in this World. As ſure therefore as I am, that there is a God and a Providence, ſo ſure I am that there will be a day of Reckoning with theſe Men, and they ſhall feel that Vengeance hereafter,

that

that does not overtake them here.

But by the meer Light of Reaſon, I cannot be *fully aſſured* that there is a State of Future *Rewards* for good Men: For this great Bar and Objection lies againſt it, That the beſt of Men are Sinners, and Great ones too; and have deſerved to ſuffer far worſe things, upon that Account, than any they meet with here. And Deliverance from that Wrath and Torment, which the beſt of Men are liable to, and worthy of, in the next World; that, tho' alone, would be an unſpeakable Favour. We cannot certainly conclude more from the Goodneſs of God, nor reflect upon him as an hard Maſter if he proceed no further. A vile Criminal has abundant Reaſon to thank his Prince, if he give him his Life, which he has forfeited over and over; and cannot with Modeſty expect, beſides this, to be received into

to the Number of his ſpecial Favourites, and be highly preferred by him.

But now the Goſpel-Revelation does give us a full Aſſurance in this matter: Chriſt has made it a Fundamental Article of our Faith, has eſtabliſhed it as a main Principle of his Religion: *This is the Promiſe that he has promiſed us, even Eternal Life.* 1 Joh. 2. 25. He has not only given us ſome dark Hints about it, but ſet it in a clear Light, and open Day. We do not gather it by a *long Train* of rational Inferences from what he has ſaid, which would make but little Impreſſion: For as a Line, the further it is drawn forth, the more does it *waver* and *tremble*; ſo the longer the Train of Deductions is in matters of a *Moral* Nature, the more hovering is our Aſſent to any Truth, and the leſs Efficacy has it on our Souls: And whatever the Learned may do, 2 Tim. 1. 10.

yet

yet the Common People have not Leiſure or Capacity for the ſpinning of a long and fine Thread. But Chriſt has *plainly* told us of this, and that not once or twice only, or by the bye; but repeated it often, expreſly and deſignedly, ſo that we meet with it in almoſt every Page of the New Teſtament.

To the Promiſe there is annexed the Oath of God; not that this makes the matter more certain *in it ſelf*: For God can no more be guilty of Lying than of Perjury. But the Oath is added to the Promiſe *for our ſakes*, to create the ſtronger Belief of it in us, whom Guilt makes ſo very jealous: Like the Publick Stamp on a piece of Silver, which doth not encreaſe the intrinſick Value of it, but only makes it the more Current.

Heb. 6. 17, 18. *God willing more Abundantly to ſhew to the Heirs of Promiſe the Immutability of his Counſel, confirmed it by an Oath; that*

that by two Immutable things in which it was impoſſible for God to lie; i. e. to deceive us, *we might have the ſtronger Conſolation.* This Promiſe hath alſo been ratified by the Blood of Chriſt, whereby the whole of the New Covenant; and among the reſt this, which is one of the main Branches of it, hath been Confirmed. Beſides which, he has alſo given us an unqueſtionable Pledge of it, in his own Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion into Heaven, whither *he is entred as our Fore-runner*; which is as fully teſtified to us, as any Matter of Fact can poſſibly be, by all his Diſciples, who could not be deceived in ſuch an Object of Senſe; and were Men of ſuch great Piety and Honeſty, that they would not deceive us if they could; and who ſealed their Teſtimony with their very Blood, Confirmed all that they ſaid with the Loſs of their Lives, and all the Comforts

forts of them. And there is this further obſervable, That when Chriſt was Aſcending, the Angels aſſured them who ſtood by and ſaw it;

Act. 1. 11. *This ſame Jeſus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, ſhall ſo come in like manner as ye have ſeen him go into Heaven.* And the ſelf-ſame Pen-man, in his Goſpel (which ſhould have been immediately joined to the Acts of the Apoſtles, had it not been for St. *John*'s Goſpel intervening) tells us

Luk. 24. 50, 51. the Manner of his Aſcenſion: *He lifted up his hands, and bleſſed them: And while he bleſſed them, he was parted from them, and taken up into Heaven.* He ſhall *ſo* come in *like manner*, when his Work of Interceſſion is finiſhed; Our great High-Prieſt ſhall come out of the Holy of Holies, to *Bleſs* his People, and appear *without Sin unto their Eternal Salvation.*

II. Tho'

II. Tho' by the Light of Reaſon only we could be clearly ſatisfied there is a Reward for the Righteous in the other World, yet we could not thereby be fully aſſured of the *Greatneſs* of it. If we could get above the Fears of Divine Wrath and Vengeance in the next World, which it is hard for a Sinner to do, who knows God and Himſelf; Yet what Ground ſhould we have to hope for a much *better* Being and Condition there, than we enjoy here? Eſpecially for a Happineſs ſo highly ſurpaſſing it, as that which in the Goſpel is propounded to us. If God ſhould *not puniſh*, yea if He ſhould *reward*, yet a Guilty Creature cannot reaſonably promiſe himſelf a very *Conſiderable* Recompence from a Holy and Righteous God, whom he hath ſo highly offended, and whom, when he hath done his beſt, he hath ſo poorly ſerved. §. II.

We

We ſhall find the Wiſeſt of the Heathens had but very groſs Idea's, mean and poor Notions of the Future State of Bliſs. Sometimes they ſpeak of it in *General* Terms only, which was but a *Cover* for their Ignorance; and thoſe too not very lofty and towring ones. *He that is afraid of Death* (ſaith * *Antoninus*) *either fears the utter loſs of all Senſe; or elſe that he ſhall have a Senſe of a different Kind from what he now hath: But if there be none left, then thou ſhalt have no Perception of any Evil at all.* And that I think is unqueſtionable. But he adds, *If thou haſt another Sort of Senſe, then thou ſhalt be another Kind of Animal, and ſhalt not ceaſe to live.* *Emperors* are not at leiſure to anſwer every poor Enquirer; elſe any Man that hath any *Senſe* at all, would preſume to ask his Imperial Majeſty

* De Seipſo, l. 8. §. 58.

what

what *Sort* of Animal he ſhall be; and what *Manner* of Life he ſhall lead: And ſo much the rather, becauſe many of the Learned Philoſophers tell us that departed Souls do enter into Brutes. And as wild and unaccountable a Paradox as this may ſeem to be, yet it hath been a very Ancient Opinion, and ſpread very far, eſpecially among the Wiſe men of the Eaſt, where * ſtill it doth greatly obtain to this very day. *Pythagoras* and his Followers, on this Account, are reported to have forborn all ſorts of Fleſh, whether of Birds or Beaſts: And allowing them their Principle, none could juſtly blame their Abſtinence. For 'tis but an Odd thing for a Man to ſit down to his Meat, when, for ought he knows, he may Chop up his Father, or Swal-

* *Burnet*'s Archæol. l. 1. cap. 2. It. in Appendice, p. 353.

low down his Mother; yea, a mans beloved Wife, for any thing he can tell, may become nearer and more intimate with him after her Death, than ever ſhe was in her Life. She that lay in his *Boſom*, may deſcend into his Entrails, turn into Nouriſhment, and, in a Literal Senſe, become *One Fleſh* with him. And theſe Philoſophers are ſo very particular, as to tell us what Sort of Brutes departed Souls enter into: Some into *Bees* *, others into *Aſſes*, &c. Now tho' a Man could reconcile himſelf to the drudging laborious Life of the one, yet it would go very much againſt the Grain to bear the cruel Stripes, and heavy Loads of the other. Nor ſhould I very heartily join in

* Socrates in Platonis Phœdone, p. 81, 82. & Tim. Locr. de Anima, p. 104. Macrob. in Somn. Scip. l. 1. ch. 9.

that

* that Man's Prayer, That my Soul, after Death, ſhould have the Honour of entring into a *Camel*, as *Sober* and *Patient* and *Sweet an Animal* as it is: For 'tis a Laborious Life thoſe Creatures lead, and a long Way they travel with a Pack of Drugs from the Eaſt, much bigger than the Bunch on their Backs.

Plutarch, in his Conſolatory Epiſtle to his Wife, on the Death of her little Daughter, ſaith, She is † *gone to a place where there is no Sorrow.* But he hath no better Proof of it than the Cuſtoms and Laws of their Anceſtors, which forbad them to uſe thoſe

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* *Bayles* Dict. in *Hali Beigh.* out of *Rycaut.* p. 18.

† Ἐκείνη εἰς τὸ ἄλυπον ἦκεσα λυπεῖν ἡμᾶς ὦ δεῖ· τί γὰρ ἡμῖν ἀπ' ἐκείνης κακὸν, εἰ μηδὲν ἐκείνη νῦν ὄζει λυπηρόν. Conſolat. ad Uxorem, p. (Operum) 611.

Funeral * Rites in behalf of Infants, which they were wont to employ about Grown Persons: *For this*, saith he, *would be unlawful, seeing they are translated into a better and a more Divine Place.* By the manner of arguing one would think this were the Speech of the little *Child* before her Departure, not the Language of her Grave Philosophical Father. But these are but General Words, let's come a little to Particulars.

Cluverius † tells us, that it was a Custom among the *Celtæ*, the *Galls*, and the *Albani*, which he proves out of *Diodorus Siculus*, *Valerius Maximus* and *Strabo*, to bury some Pieces of Money with the deceased Party, and send some by him to their Friends in the other State, for their Use there;

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* Τοῖς δὲ πατρίοις καὶ παλαιοῖς ἔθεσι καὶ νόμοις ἐμφαίνεται, &c. Id. p. 612.

† De Antiquâ Germ. l. 1. c. 32. p. 222.

and

and to lend their Acquaintance Money to be repaid them there; and that this is a very common Cuſtom among many Heathen Nations to this day: As alſo to * kill Camels on their Graves, Horſes, Concubines and Butlers; and burn their Garments and other Attire; or bury them and Houſhold-Stuff and Arms with them for their Uſe when † they came thither; and they could have no very Extraordinary Apprehenſions of the Happineſs of Souls there, who were guilty of ſuch a Practice as this. But theſe were *Barbarous* People, as the *Greeks* in their abundant Civility to the reſt of Mankind were wont to call all the World beſides themſelves; tho' they were Originally beholden to other Nations for all the Learning and Knowledge on which

* Hody *of the Reſurrection*, p. 6, 32, 33, 46.
† Lucian de Luctu, p. 432. Edit. Bened.

they ſo much Valued themſelves. Let us therefore ſee what theſe Sons of Wiſdom have to ſay to the Point in hand.

Homer may challenge the Privilege of being heard firſt, becauſe of his Great Antiquity, and his being the firſt *Diſcoverer* of the Elyſian Fields. He brings in *Proteus* thus ſpeaking to *Menelaus*: *The Gods ſhall ſend thee to the Elyſian Fields, which lie on the utmoſt parts of the Earth* *, *where thou ſhalt live ſafe and happy; there being neither too great a Quantity of Rain or Snow, or too long a Winter; but the bleſſed Inhabitants are continually refreſh'd with the gentle Breathing of cool Breezes that come from the Ocean.* A good, dry, and warm place, comfortable enough for a *naked* Soul, or one that hath at

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* Τῇ ϗ ῥηΐστη βιοτὴ πέλει ἀνθρώποισιν.
Ὀυ νιφετὸς, ὔτ ἂρ χειμὼν πολὺς, ὔτέ ποτ' ὄμβρος, &c.
Odyſſ. l. 4. v. 564.

beſt

beſt ſo thin and ſlight a Cloathing as that of *Æther* muſt be ſuppoſed to be. But a good *Seat* is not very deſirable, without ſuitable Sports and Diverſion. And *Virgil* will inform us what they are. "Some ſpend their "time in *Wreſtling* *. One would think he was deſcribing *other Fields*, which I am loth to mention, and not thoſe of *Elyſium*. "Others in "*Singing* and *Dancing*, the Happineſs "of a Stage or a Play-houſe. The "*Warlike Souls* having put off their "glittering Armor, in a very peaceable manner are refreſhing themſelves, and their *unbridled Steeds*. "The Launces that were wont to be "cruelly run through the Sides and "Hearts of their Enemies, are Mercifully ſtuck into the Ground only.

* Pars in gramineis exercent membra palæſtris,
Contendunt ludo, &c.
Virgil Æneid. l. 6. v. 643.

" And they behold their Chariots " with as much Pride and Pleaſure " as ever they rode in 'em when they " drove them over the Carkaſes of " their fallen Enemies: For tho' they have left their *Bodies* behind 'em, they have carried along with 'em the ſame * *Humors* they had, whether Jocular and Pleaſant, or Savage and Cruel.

Plutarch not having Cordials of his own ſtrong enough to ſupport the Spirits of *Apollonius* for the Loſs of his Vertuous Son, borrows one from *Pindar*, whom he quotes, deſcribing the State of the Pious after Death, to whom he would have him believe the Departed Youth was gone; whoſe Happineſs he deſcribes in Words to this effect: *They do continually* † *enjoy a*

* Secundùm illum (Virgilium) res quoque leviores, quas viri exercuerant, etiam poſt Corpus exercent. — Quæ gratia Curruum, &c. *Macrob. in Somn. Scip. l.* 1. *cap.* 9.

† Plutarchi Conſolat. ad Apollon. p. 120.

clear

clear Sun-ſhine, when this Earth of ours is wrapt up in Darkneſs. The Fields round about them are adorned with beautiful Roſes, and ſhaded with Trees that yield Frankincenſe, and bear Golden Fruit. Some ſport themſelves on Horſe-back, others divert themſelves with Muſick. The Country is always pleaſant, and ſo are they who dwell in it. And there are no other Clouds but what ariſe from the Smoak of Incenſe, which they plentifully burn on their Altars, whoſe ſweet Odours at once refreſh their Gods and themſelves too.

But it may be ſome will ſay theſe were *Poets*, (yet Poets were their great Divines * of Old:) Let us therefore hear ſome of their grave *Moral* Philoſophical Writers. *Plato* brings in *Socrates* †, giving a Deſcription of the future Happy State which he learnt

* *Stillingfleet*'s Orig. Sacr. p. 57, 58.

† In Axiocho. Tom. 3. p. 371.

from

from *Gobryas*, who had it from I know not what Brazen Tables, exactly reſembling that of *Pindar*; for which reaſon I ſhall not tranſlate it. Tho', in the Cloſe, *Socrates* confeſſes he is not ſure that theſe Particulars are ſo, but only in the * General, that the Soul, when it leaves the Body, goes to a place where it lives free from Grief; but whether it be above or below, he knoweth not. *Seneca* tells us that there *the † Secrets of Nature ſhall be open'd; there ſhall be neither Night nor Shade; all the Stars mingling their Lights together, and joining them as in one Common Stock.* And if this be ſo, the latter part of the Opinion of the *Magi*, which ‖ *Plutarch* from *Theopompus* informs us of, may be true, that *after a bloody Scuffle among*

* P. 372.

† *Ep.* 102. Aliquando Naturæ tibi Arcana retegentur, &c.

‖ De Iſide, p. 370.

the

the Gods for ſix thouſand Years, at laſt Mankind ſhall be happy, and neither need Food, nor caſt a Shadow. But as for the Former part of it, *viz.* their not wanting of Food, *Tully* is of another mind: And, in truth, no Man talks ſo pleaſantly on this Argument as he doth: For he fancies that *Separated Souls will get a little above the Clouds and thick Exhalations of the Middle* * *Region of the Air, into a clear and warm place*; which will be ſo agreeable, that they will *not attempt to climb higher*; and there they ſhall be *nouriſh'd with the ſame Food with which the* † *Stars are fed.* Now it may be the Reader may long to *know*, but he will not long to take

* —Neceſſe eſt ita feratur ut penetret & dividat omne Cœlum hoc, in quo nubes, imbres, ventique coguntur, &c. *Tuſc. Qu. l.* 1. *p.* 1056.

† —Eaque ei demum naturalis eſt Sedes cùm ad ſui ſimilem penetravit, in quâ nullâ re egens aletur, & ſuſtentabitur iiſdem rebus quibus Aſtra ſuſtentantur & aluntur. *Id. Ib.*

his

his *Commons* with them, when I have told him what Sort of Diet it is, thoſe Heavenly Bodies are nouriſh'd by. 'Tis very Coarſe, if * *Tully* himſelf, or † *Seneca* may be believed: For 'tis no other than the thick and greaſy Vapors which Steam up from the Waters, or the Dunghil of this Earth on which we tread; and a Man Man might juſtly fear the being ſtarved among them: For as the Stars are many, and very great, ſo they are hard Labourers; and therefore, as we might reaſonably ſuppoſe, if he

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* De Nat. Deorum, l. 2. p. 1134.

† Totum hoc Cœlum, quod igneus æther, mundi ſumma pars, claudit, omnes hæ Stellæ, quarum iniri non poteſt numerus, omnis hic cœleſtium cœtus; & (ut alia præteream) hic tam prope à nobis agens curſum Sol, omni terrarum ambitu non ſemel major, alimentum ex terreno trahunt, & inter ſe partiuntur: nec ullo alio ſcilicet quàm halitu terrarum ſuſtinentur. Hoc illis alimentum, hic paſtus eſt, &c. *Senec. Quæſt. Nat. lib.* 6. *c.* 16.

had

had not told us, * *greedy Eaters* too; and beſides them, the *Sun*, who is much nearer (eſpecially according to *his* Opinion) and a very great Devourer, hath nothing elſe to nouriſh him but what he can plunder from this little Globe of ours. And that the *Muſick* may be ſuitable to the Feaſt, the Separated Souls are entertained there with the imaginary † Harmony of the Spheres. But the Orator goes on: ‖ *There they ſhall be freed from Æmulation and Covetouſneſs*, (tho' in ſo great a Scarcity of Provi-

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* ---Tot Sydera tam exercitata, tam avida per diem noctemque, ut in Opere, ita & in Paſtu. *Quæſt. Nat. l.* 2. *cap.* 5.

† Quid? hic, inquam, quis eſt qui complet aures meas tantus & tam dulcis Sonus? Hic eſt, inquit ille, qui intervallis conjunctus imparibus, ſed tamen pro ratâ portione diſtinctis, impulſu & motu ipſorum orbium conficitur, &c. *Tully in Somn. Scip. p.* 1318. *col.* 2.

‖ Profecto beati erimus, cum corporibus relictis, & cupiditatum & æmulationum erimus expertes, &c. *Tuſc. Qu. ubi ſupra.*

ſions

ſions as muſt needs be among them, there's Temptation enough to that Vice) *and from the great Height of the Place have a notable Advantage of better underſtanding the Heavenly Bodies*, (who ſo unconſcionably rob 'em) *and the whole Structure of this Earth*, (which is ſo kind as to nouriſh them) tho' ſo wretched a Place, one would think, ſhould be no very pleaſant Sight: Eſpecially conſidering what he pleaſeth himſelf withal at another Time, that when he dies *he ſhall* * *depart from this rude and diſorderly Rout and Crew here below.* And I confeſs 'tis a deſirable thing to get out of ſuch a mad Croud; but then it can't be very agreeable to a Wiſe and Serious Spirit to behold them at a Diſtance, no more than to be among

* O præclarum diem, cùm ad illud divinum animorum Concilium cœtumque proficiſcar, cumque ex hâc turbâ & colluvione diſcedam. *De Senectute, p.* 1264.

them.

them. But then *he ſhall be joined to* * *that Aſſembly and Council of Souls, and converſe with thoſe Famous Men, whom he had known, and heard, and written of.* This indeed is a noble Strain, one of the beſt that I have obſerved among all the ancient Philoſophers. But *Socrates* ſaid it before him, and from him he borrowed it: For *Plato* brings him in, comforting himſelf with the Thoughts, that on his Removal hence he ſhould be with *Orpheus* and *Muſæus*, with *Heſiod* † and *Homer*. Now *Poets* he knew were pleaſant Companions in this World, and I ſuppoſe he might think they were ſo in the other alſo. He adds, that he ſhould be *wonderfully pleaſed with the Society of* Palamedes *and* Ajax; tho' I don't very well underſtand what

* Ib.

† Plato's Apolog. Socr. p. 41.

very

very agreeable Converſation there can be between a Moral Philoſopher on the one ſide, and a rough and boyſterous Souldier on the other. Eſpecially, if according to the Notion of ſome of the Heathens, they retain the ſame Delights and Humors there which they had here. For my own part, I ſhould not be very fond of the Company of *Ajax*, who, becauſe he could not get the Warlike Accoutrements of *Achilles*, the better to Murder other Men, grew ſo mad thereupon as to kill *Himſelf*.

Heſiod * tells us, and *Plato* † falls in with him, and ‖ *Plutarch*, That Good Men, when they die, are turned into *Dæmons*. And ſo did the Old *Roman*

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* Τοὶ μὲν Δαίμονες εἰσι, &c. Heſiod.

† De Repub. l. 5. p. 468, 469.

‖ In Romulo, p. 36.

Laws.

* Laws. Tho', as our † Learned *Mede* hath obſerved, ſome departed Souls were meer *Heroes*, of an Inferior Rank, but Novices for a time, and like Punies, not yet called to the Bar. But as theſe made them *Gods*, ſo *Muſæus* and his Son as quoted, and one would think approved too by *Plato* ‖, make them *Brutes*; for, according to them, they ſpend all their time in Perpetual *Revellings* and *Drunkenneſs*; the Healths go round, till their *Heads* do ſo too, and *Everlaſting Tippling*

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* Divos & eos qui cœleſtes ſemper habiti, colunto: & ollos quos in Cœlum merita vocaverint. Deorum Manium jura ſancta ſunto: Hos letho datos Divos habento. *Tully de Legibus, l.* 2. *p.* 1196.

† Works, p. 631.

‖ Μουσαῖος δὲ τούτων νεανικώτερα τ' ἀγαθὰ, καὶ ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ παρὰ θεῶν διδόασι τοῖς δικαίοις. Εἰς ἅδου γὰρ ἀγαγόντες τῷ λόγῳ, καὶ κατακλίναντες, καὶ συμπόσιον τῶν ὁσίων κατασκευάσαντες, ἐστεφανωμένους ποιοῦσι τὴν ἅπαντα χρόνον ἤδη διάγειν μεθύοντας. Ἡγησάμενοι κάλλιστον ἀρετῆς μισθὸν μέθην αἰώνιον. Plato de Republ. lib. 2. p. 363.

and Sottiſhneſs is made the faireſt Reward of Vertue. Theſe Deſcriptions of the Future State are ſo abſurd and mean, and ſome of them ſo very groſs and foul, that 'tis impoſſible to Spiritualize them, or make any tolerable Apology for them, tho' a * Learned Man hath attempted it. But take the Beſt of theſe Authors; and as for the Viſion of God, Communion and Fellowſhip with him, which is the Life of a Soul, and the moſt Valuable part of the Happineſs of Heaven, they had no Thoughts, no Notions, no Hopes at all, or at beſt but very weak and faint Ones of ſo high a Privilege, which they ſeldom mention, if ever they touch upon it. Poſſibly here and there a Paſſage or two looking that way, may be pick'd up; but a Man muſt

† Le Clerk in Notis in Orac. Chaldaica, p. 176.

go

go deep for that Ore; and when he hath got it up, 'tis ſo ſmall, that 'tis loſt in the much greater Quantity of Droſs; and like the Silver that's found in ſome Countries, the Separation is very difficult, and what is brought up will not bear the Charges of Digging and Refining. So far was *Plutarch* from having any raiſed and ſettled Apprehenſions of this, that in his Treatiſe of the *Tranquillity of the Mind*, where one would have expected it, inſtead of ſome noble *Flight* he can hardly lift up his Wings above the Ground. Tho' in another place * indeed he drops a noble Saying in the midſt of a heap of wild Stuff, where it ſtands like a fair Houſe quite out of the Road, and in the midſt of a dirty Bottom, in which none would have looked for it, nor can ſee it till he be juſt upon it: That *the Souls*

* De Iſide, p. 382.

of Men, while in the Body, have no Converſe with God, but only as they have ſome little Knowledge of him, as in a Dream by the help of Philoſophy: but when being diſmiſſed from the Body, they enter on that pure, inviſible and impaſſible State, God is their Ruler, they depend on him, and behold without Satiety, and deſire that Beauty which Men are not able to expreſs. But herein he exceeded himſelf, and ſpake above what he did at other times: For the Higheſt that he could reach, when he was treating on a Subject where it was moſt proper for him to have brought it in, was this: * *He that hath learned the Nature of the Soul, and thinks that by Death it ſhall gain a Better, or at leaſt not a WORSE Condition, has no ſmall Freedom from the Fear of Death.*

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* De Tranquill. Animæ. Operum, p. 476.

And

And that is as high as meer Reaſon can carry any Man, that we ſhall not be in a *WORSE Condition.* Now this would be but a melancholy Conſideration, to be ſent into juſt ſuch another World as this is, and be doomed to live Eternally in it. The Comforts of the preſent State are fickle and uncertain, empty and frothy; its Troubles are maſſy and heavy. And ſuch of 'em as are of a *lighter* nature, many times miſerably diſcompoſe us: As the Modern Philoſophers tell us, that a *Column of Air* (a thin and ſlight Body) preſſes very hard upon us. Whatever it may be in the *Phyſical*, in the *Moral* Senſe 'tis an undoubted Truth, that there are *Vacuities* and Empty Spaces in every Part of this World; they are *ſpungy* and hollow Subſtances which we feed upon. They who have drunk at the River-Head, have never been able to quench their Thirſt, nor

could they be ſatisfied with any Enjoyments here below. *Young* Men, not having experienced the Vanity of them, think the Good things of this Life to be very Valuable; but in a little while they ſee their own Error and Miſtake; and that what they took for a Diamond, is but congealed Water, eaſily melted between our Fingers; or a Glaſs-drop that is ſhiver'd in pieces with one Touch of a Man's Hand. If *Grace* has not mortified us to this World; yet Age, Senſe, Reaſon, and Experience, will make us weary of it: A place wherein a Good and Wiſe Man has hardly Patience to hold out living for ſo ſhort a Space of Time as ſeventy or eighty Years. How ſad would it be, to be always chained down to ſuch an Element of Sin and Sorrow, without any Capacity or Hope of being ever removed? How ſlow are the Minutes, how tedious

are

are the Hours to a Man in Miſery? Time to ſuch a one is like the Shadow on a Dial, which he that looks upon can't perceive that it moves at all. And yet many of the Calamities we groan under, we know before-hand will be what the Fathers ſaid of *Julian*'s Perſecution, a *little*, tho' a black *Cloud*, *which will quickly blow over.* At the worſt we always have this to relieve us, that in the *Grave*, (to which we know not how near we may be,) *the Weary are at Reſt.* And yet in the Thoughts of the Pained Man, as well as in the Style of a *Prophet*, a ſingle *Day* ſtands for a *Year.* How intolerable then muſt it needs be to a diſtreſſed Creature, to think, I am in a Region of Miſery, where there is a conſtant Revolution of Day and Night; and in the *Climate* wherein I dwell, theſe are very unequally divided, the latter uſually being much Longer than the former! Were I to

Job 3. 17.

linger out ſome Thouſands of Years only, it were ſad; but 'tis infinitely worſe than ſo with me: For, wretched Man that I am, thus muſt I languiſh away to the Ages of Eternity, without any hopes of a better State.

But now the *Goſpel-Revelation* drives away theſe black and gloomy Thoughts and Fears, as the Riſing-Sun doth the Darkneſs and Horror of the Night. For it propoſeth to us a Future Happineſs ſo great, that we have not Words big enough to expreſs, nor Faculties large enough to comprehend. *It does not yet* indeed *appear* fully *what we ſhall be.* Yet ſo much is clearly revealed, as is abundantly ſufficient to raiſe our Souls to an Admiration of it, and draw forth our moſt ardent Deſires after it. Let us briefly conſider it as to our Souls and Bodies.

1 Joh. 3. 2.

1. As

1. As to *our Souls*. They ſhall be enlighten'd with the cleareſt Knowledge of God; ſo that there ſhall not be the leaſt *Speck* on our Eye, or the ſmalleſt *Cloud* on our Mind. We ſhall be filled with flaming Love to God, and never more complain of any Chilneſs or Coldneſs of our Hearts towards him. We ſhall perfectly reſemble him, and not be any longer ſuch *party-coloured* Creatures, as we now are, which makes us almoſt aſhamed of our ſelves. We ſhall dwell under the bright Beams of his Love and Favour, and never more complain, Whither *has my Beloved withdrawn himſelf?* We ſhall contemplate, praiſe, and adore him, without any Wearineſs, or one diſtracting Thought; yea, we ſhall feel a conſtant and perpetual Delight and Joy continually bubbling up within, wherewithall our Souls ſhall be continually overflowed.

2. As

2. As to *our Bodies*. This is one part of our Happineſs, the Diſcovery whereof is *entirely* owing to Revelation. The Philoſophers never dreamt of it: 'Tis well known with what Contempt the *Stoicks* ſpake of the Body; they call'd it the * Pouch, the Garment, the Sheath, the Hull, and the Leathern-Bottle of the Soul, and the Bond † of Slavery: They would not allow it to be ſo much as a ‖ Part of themſelves: They and the *Platoniſts*, and *Pythagoreans*, and all others who were for the μετεμψύχωσις, or παλιγγενεσία, renounced all Thoughts of the *ſame* Body. And that Party of the *Stoicks*, and *Plato*, who were for the Revolution of all things, expected to receive the *ſame* Body indeed;

* Gatak. not. in Anton. p. 309.

† Senec. Epiſt. 65.

‖ Mens cujuſque, is eſt quiſque. *Tully Som. Scip. p.* 1319.

but

but then it was juſt the *ſame in all* * *reſpects* whatever, not only as to Subſtance, but alſo as to all its ill Qualities and Diſeaſes. Many of them thought † that all the Evil that is in the World proceeded from the neceſſary Malignity of Matter, which was of ſo ſtubborn a Nature, that it was too hard for the Gods themſelves; and theſe Men could not rationally deſire to be again hamper'd by the hateful *Hyle*, which was altogether as invincible as it was miſchievous. *Plutarch* ‖ tells us, it is a very ridiculous thing to imagin that the *Bodies* of Good Men do aſcend, and to *place Earth in Heaven* it ſelf. And the Primitive Perſecutors were wont, after they had burnt the Chri-

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* Origenes c. Celſum, p. 208, 209. It. 244, 245.

† *Stillingfleet*'s Orig. Sac. p. 496, 497.

‖ In Romulo, p. 35, 36.

ſtians,

ſtians, to ſcatter their * Aſhes, that ſo they might render the Reſurrection impoſſible, as well as they judg'd the Doctrine of it to be † ridiculous.

But Revelation aſſures us, that at the laſt Day we ſhall have our Bodies reſtored with great Advantage; for they ſhall be of ſo great Purity and Fineneſs of Compoſition, as to be ſubject to no Waſtes, need no Repairs, be liable to no Neceſſities, ſuggeſt no bad Thoughts, and be the Seat of no Diſeaſes or Deformities. Theſe vile and baſe Bodies, ſhall then become bright and glorious; Theſe earthly and fleſhly ones, ſhall become ſpiritual and heavenly; Theſe weak and infirm ones, ſhall become active, ſtrong, and nimble as
1 Cor. 15. the Wing of an Angel; Theſe mortal ones, ſhall put on Immortality;

* Euſebii Hiſt. l. 5. c. 1. ad finem.

† Celſus apud Origen, l. 5. p. 242.

And

And theſe corruptible ones, ſhall put on Incorruption: For *ſo ſhall be the Reſurrection of the Juſt.* They ſhall be made *like to the glorious Body of our dear Redeemer*; be bright Mirrours and everlaſting Monuments of the Infinite Power of God, wherein it ſhall be ſeen what he is able to do, by *the working of that mighty Power of his, whereby he is able to ſubdue all things unto himſelf.* Yea, ſuch glorious Creatures ſhall holy Men be at the laſt Day, both in Soul, and Body too, that the Angels ſhall ſtand amazed at them; And Chriſt ſhall be *admired in his Saints, and glorified in all them that do believe, in that day.* Phil. 3. 21. 2 Theſſ. 1. 10.

§. III. III. Natural Light and Reaſon can't aſſure us that all this Happineſs ſhall be *Eternal and Unchangeable.* Many of the Heathen Philoſophers were ſo far from believing this, that they had contrary Apprehenſions.

Ariſtotle

Ariſtotle for a long time, the great Idol of the Learned World, tho' ſo famous for all ſorts of Learning; and tho' he hath given us the beſt Syſtem of *Ethicks*, yet is ſuppoſed to have pluck'd this up by the Roots, and deſtroyed the very Subject of the Point; for he hath been thought to deny the Immortality of the Soul; and his Friends have been put to it to clear him. Let us conſider the *Stoicks*, whether as they came very near to Chriſtianity in their Moral Precepts, they alſo do the ſame as to this grand Motive and Encouragement to the Practice of them. They were ſo divided in their Sentiments, that Learned Men have been almoſt as much at a Loſs to know what Opinion they actually held, as they were what was moſt reaſonable to embrace; and the one have been as much divided in their Reports, as the other in their Sentiments. Out

of

of Deference to Authority, we muſt hear the *Imperial* Philoſopher in the firſt place, who propoſeth the Queſtion, * why the Gods who have *order'd all things well, and with a ſingular Love to Mankind, have neglected to take care, that Men, and eſpecially the Good, who have maintained as it were a frequent Correſpondence with them, and by their pious Works and holy Miniſtrations have been familiar with them, that theſe Men, when they are Dead, do no longer exiſt, but are extinguiſh'd for ever.* *Meric Caſaubon* † indeed interprets theſe Words of the Reſurrection of the Body. But Learned ‖ Men have

* Antoninus, l. 12. §. 5.

† In notis in M. Antoninum.

‖ De Mente ſolâ ſatagit Marcus, de Corpore nihil ſolicitus, quod nec ſe, nec ſuum, nec ſui quicquam à quoquam cenſeri volebant Stoici. *Gataker in Annot. in Antonin. p.* 423. *Edit. Cantabrigiæ* 1652. Hody *of the Reſurrection, p.* 23, 24, 25.

proved

proved that herein he was miſtaken. He ſpeaks of the utter Extinction of the *Soul* by Death. And the Anſwer he gives to this ſtabbing Queſtion is, *That if it be ſo, you muſt know for certain, they would have order'd it otherwiſe if it had been juſt, and poſſible and natural, and ought to have been otherwiſe managed.* And yet at another time he propounds this Queſtion, * *If Souls do continue, how will the Air contain 'em all; eſpecially conſidering they have been from Eternity?* Which he anſwers by propounding another, *How the Earth is able to contain all the Carkaſes, which for ſo very long a ſpace of time have been buried in it?* And then adds, *As the Carkaſes of Men, when they have been for ſome time in the Earth, are changed and diſſolved ſo as to make room for others; ſo Souls being tranſlated into the Air, after they have*

* Antoninus, l. 4. §. 21.

abode

abode there for some time * *are changed, burnt, melted down* (like the Metals of a Founder, I suppose,) *and so run into the common Soul of the World; and thereby make way for others to come into their places*; and because Men die very fast, I conceive this must be very quickly done, lest the Place be crouded, and separated Souls be *stifled* for want of Room and *Breath*, tho' in the midst of the *Air* it self. Were it not that he adds these Words, That *thus a Man would answer on* this Hypothesis, † *that Souls do supervive their Bodies*; I would say, that to reconcile this with the Passage which I but just now cited out of him, would be as difficult as 'tis to make the two Poles to meet

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* Οὕτως αἱ εἰς τὴν ἀέρα μεθιστάμεναι ψυχαὶ, ἐπὶ πόσον συμμείνασαι μεταβάλλουσι, καὶ χρόνον, καὶ ἐξάπτονται εἰς τὴν τῶν ὅλων σπερματικὸν λόγον ἀναλαμβανόμεναι, &c. Id. Ib.

† Τοῦτο δ' ἄν τις ἀποκρίναιτο ἐφ' ὑποθέσει τοῦ τὰς ψυχὰς διαμένειν. Ib.

and kiſs each other. He reels and ſtaggers to and fro, and knows not what Opinion to be of. If he had not a more *ſteady* hand in Government than he had in Reaſoning and Philoſophy, he would have made but a very indifferent Ruler.

Others of the *Stoicks* believed, that after Death the Soul laſted as long as its Body did continue. And the *Egyptians* were of the ſame Opinion, and that was the reaſon of their embalming the Bodies of the Dead. For this we have the Authority of *Servius* *, which the moſt Learned *Gataker* indeed puts a Slur upon, ſaying, *I don't* † *know whence he had it*: Not I neither; but he who lived ſo many hundred years ago, might have met with it in ſome of their Books, which

* Ad Æneid. l. 3. p. 664.

† Unde habeat, neſcio. *Gataker Annot. in Anton. p.* 140.

have

have not been tranſmitted down to us; nothing being more common than 'tis for Learned Men as much to bewail the Loſs of many Ancient Writings, as their neareſt Relations could do the Death of the Authors of 'em. Nor is that other Reflection of that Great Man, whereby he would diſcredit this Teſtimony of *Servius*, of any great Weight, *viz.* as *tho' the* * *Egyptians had borrowed this Opinion from the Stoicks.* For 'tis very likely that *Servius*'s Author might ſo miſrepreſent it, as if the *Egyptians* had taken it from the *Stoicks*; whereas, in truth, the latter ſtole it from the former; according to the known humour of the *Greeks*, who did vainly arrogate to themſelves thoſe Inventions, which 'tis very plain they borrowed from their Neighbours. And

* Quaſi ſc. à Stoâ dogma iſtud arripuerint. *Ægyptii ſc. Id. ib.*

ſome tell us this was the true * Reaſon why the *Egyptians* were wont to keep the Carkaſes of their Friends in their Houſes and Cloſets, and ſet 'em at Table as formal Gueſts, believing they had there the *Whole Man*, not only the *Body*, but the *Soul* too. Tho' ſuch Company I ſuppoſe would not very much ſupport the Diſcourſe, nor greatly enflame the Reckoning.

Other *Stoicks* thought, that it was with Human Souls, as 'tis with † Material Beings; there was ſome ſolid Subſtance at the bottom, which did always remain, and from which, in proceſs of time, new Souls did ſpring when the Old ones were diſſolved; ſomewhat like *new Mill'd Money* produced from the old Coin that was ſo miſerably clipt and debas'd.

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* Hody *of the Reſurrection*, p. 12.

† Gatak. Annot. in Antonin. p. 140. It. 301.

Others

Others of them thought Souls did laſt till the Univerſal * Conflagration, which they put at a very conſiderable diſtance from the Age wherein they lived. *Cleanthes* ſaid *All* Souls did ſo; but *Chryſippus* and ſome † Others ſay only thoſe of Good Men. But then they were to ceaſe from being individual Beings any longer, and to be *refunded* into the Elements of the World, or that Univerſal Soul, whence they were Originally taken. Which a Learned Man ‖ thus very aptly repreſents. 'Tis as if a Man ſhould fill a Veſſel with Water taken out of the Sea, and then ſome time after ſhould break the Veſſel, and let the Water run again into the Ocean; wherein

* Id. p. 139.

† Arius Didymus *in his Account of the Stoical Philoſophy, as quoted by* Euſeb. Præp. Evang. l. 15. c. 20. p. 822. Edit. Pariſ.

‖ Huetii Concordia Fidei cum Ratione, p. 159.

it is as it were loſt, being mingled and incorporated with the mighty Maſs, tho' it be not annihilated.

And this was the Opinion of *Pythagoras* too and his Followers; and * *Heraclitus* alſo, the Author and Founder of a Sect of Philoſophers who bore his Name.

But others of them did not think that Souls, tho' they took them for pretty durable Beings, did laſt altogether ſo long. They fancied that they did † periſh at length after they had worn out ſeveral Bodies, with which from time to time they were cloathed, as with ſo many new Suits of Apparel.

And herein they did agree in the main with the *Pythagoreans* and *Pla-*

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* Id. 160.

† Stoici uſuram nobis largiuntur tanquam cornicibus: diu manſuros aiunt animos, ſemper negant. *Tully Tuſc. Qu. l.* 1. *p.* 1060.

toniſts,

toniſts, who held the Tranſmigration of Souls, either into Brutes, or other humane Bodies, or both ſucceſſively; which as we obſerved in the foregoing Section was a moſt *Catholick* Opinion of whole Nations in the Eaſt; as alſo it * was of the *Egyptians*, and the *Druids* too, and the Ancient *Germans* in the Weſt. How often the Soul might be a *Widower*, and with how many Bodies it might ſucceſſively Marry, I do not know, nor think it worth the while to enquire. But herein ſome at leaſt of the *Stoicks* did differ from others, that at laſt they thought the Soul it ſelf did drop away and crumble into nothing. Hence *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſæus* reflecting on the unhappy Death of the brave and generous *Coriolanus*,

* Cluverius de Germ. Antiq. l. 1. c. 32. Hody *of the Reſurrection*, *p.* 6, 7, 8. *Dr.* Jackſon, *Vol.* 3. *p.* 424.

hath these Words: *If when* * *the frame of the Body, whatever that be, is destroyed, that of the Soul perisheth also, and is annihilated; I don't see how those can be accounted Happy, who having received no Advantage from their Vertue, yet perish for it.* But then, as appears from the following Words, he did not carry this so far, that those great Souls should remain *for ever*, or be *Eternally* rewarded, tho' he saith that some do so think; because he thought, agreeably to the Sentiments of the

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* Ἐι μὲν οὖν ἅμα τοῖς σώμασι διαλυομένοις καὶ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὅτι δὴ ποτὲ ἔστιν ἐκεῖνο, συνδιαλύεται, καὶ οὐδαμῇ οὐθὲν ἔστιν ἔτι, οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως μακαρίους ὑπολάβῳ τοὺς μηθὲν ἀπολαύσαντας τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀγαθὸν, δι' αὐτὴν δὲ ταύτην ἀπολομένους· εἰ δὲ ἄφθαρτοι μέχρι τοῦ παντὸς τυγχάνουσιν αἱ ψυχαὶ ἡμῶν οὖσαι, καθάπερ οἴονταί τινες, ἢ χρόνον μετὰ τὴν ἀπαλλαγὴν τινα τῶν σωμάτων ἐνδιαμένουσι, μήκιστον μὲν αἱ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν, ἐλάχιστον δὲ αἱ τῶν κακῶν, ἀποχρῶσα τιμὴ φάνοιτ' ἂν τοῖς ἀρετὴν ἀσκοῦσι, καὶ εἰ ἐναντιώθη τὰ ἐκ τῆς τύχης, ἡ παρὰ τῶν ζώντων εὐλογία, καὶ μνήμη μέχρι πλείστου παραμείνασα χρόνου· ὃ καὶ τῷ ἀνδρὶ ἐκείνῳ συνέβη. Dionys. Antiq. Rom. p. 529, 530.

Stoicks,

Stoicks, they would be ſufficiently recompenc'd for all their Vertues and Sufferings, if they continued only for a *Conſiderable Time* in a State of Happineſs above, and were highly commended here below, as *it happen'd*, ſaith he, *to that Man*.

Beſides theſe, as St. *Auſtin* * informs us out of *Varro*, there were a Sort of Men who held that there was a certain great *Year*, when all the ſame Stars and Planets ſhall return to the ſame Configuration, and then there ſhall be a new Production of all Men, and all other things again, which ſhall riſe up ſucceſſively in the ſame manner, and all the ſame Circumſtances wherein they have already appeared. So that I ſhall again begin juſt as I have lately done, to write the very ſelf-ſame Book, on the very ſame individual

* De Civitate Dei, l. 22. c. 28.

Paper,

Paper, with the very ſelf-ſame Pen and Ink, and my Reader be got juſt to the very ſelf-ſame place in it where he now is. And tho' by the Title which St. *Auſtin* from *Varro* gives them, *viz.* that of *Genethliaci*, one would take 'em to be a deſpicable ſort of *Figure-flingers and Conjurers*, yet they were no leſs Men than * *Plato* and *Pythagoras*, and their Followers, and the *Egyptians*, and many of the *Indian* Philoſophers; and ſome of the very *Stoicks* too, tho' they derided St. *Paul* as a *Babbler* for Preaching the Reſurrection in the Chriſtian Senſe. Theſe Men are far from being agreed about the exact Number of Years when the Stars and Planets ſhall return exactly to the ſame Configuration: And therefore I can't tell the Reader how

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* *See for this Dr.* Jackſon, *Vol.* 3. *p.* 425. *and* Hody *of the Reſurrection*, à p. 16. ad 23.

often

often Souls, as well as other Beings, ſhall run this Round, and, like Fairies, dance in this imaginary Ring. Only for our Comfort we muſt know, that this will be an * *Everlaſting Tautology.*

Beſides all this, there are ſome Philoſophers, and St. *Auſtin* † tells us they are of the higheſt Form, who thought *that the Souls of Good Men are a long time at Reſt; but after a very conſiderable Time they come down from Heaven, and appear in Bodies again.* And there was yet another Hypotheſis, which was no Fiction of *Virgil's*, but what he brings in as a known

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* —Τῶν τοιούτων περιόδων ἐξ ἀϊδίου γινομένων ἀκαταπαύστως. Numenius in Euſeb. Demonſtr. l. 15. c. 19. p. 821. Edit. Pariſ. It. Origen. c. Celſum, l. 4. p. 208.

† Hoc dixerunt valde magni Philoſophi. *St. Aug. de Tempore, Serm.* 139. *It.* 142.

Tra-

‖ Tradition, That the wicked, but curable Spirits, after they had ſmarted for their Folly in the infernal Gulf for a thouſand Years, were like ſo many Head of Cattle driven to the Waters of * *Lethe*, where they drank

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‖ Dii quibus imperium eſt animarum, umbræque ſilentes,
Et Chaos & Phlegethon, loca nocte tacentia late
Sit mihi fas audita loqui, ſit numine veſtro
Pandere res altâ terrâ & caligine merſas.
Virgil Æneid. 6. v. 264.

* —Animæ quibus altera Fato
Corpora debentur, Lethæi ad fluminis undam
Securos latices & longa oblivia potant.
Virgil. Æneid. l. 6. v. 713.
O Pater anne aliquas ad cælum hinc ire putandum eſt
Sublimes animas, iterumque ad tarda reverti
Corpora? quæ lucis miſeris tam dira cupido?
Id. v. 719.
Has omnes ubi mille rotam volvêre per annos,
Lethæum ad fluvium Deus evocat agmine magno,
Scilicet immemores ſupera ut convexa reviſant
Rurſus, & incipiant in corpora velle reverti.
Id. v. 748.

ſo

ſo long till they were perfectly beſotted to that degree, that they did irrecoverably forget every thing which they had ever done or ſuffered. But as *Lucian* † wittily obſerves, it fell out very happily for the World that *Alceſtis*, and *Proteſilaus*, and *Theſeus*, and *Ulyſſes*, ſlipt by without taking a Cup there, or elſe it had been impoſſible they ſhould ever have remembred any thing, and given us ſuch a particular Account of it, as they have done when they return'd to this Earth of ours. After this Draught, they are received up into Heaven where they enjoy all manner of Happineſs, till being weary of it, the freak takes them to make another Trial of their Fortune here below, and ſo they return to this World again; whereupon unleſs it be a very ſorry Heaven in-

† De Luctu. Tom. 2. p. 428, 429. Edit. Benedicti.

deed,

deed, they pay very dear for their Folly.

Thus have the Heathens for want of a Guide from Heaven entertained theſe ſo very different and extravagant Notions about it. And for any thing that meer Reaſon can ſay to the contrary, it may be but a ſhort Term of Happineſs which we ſhall enjoy in the other State; and that would be a more abundant Recompence than we could pretend to deſerve. And tho' the Soul being Immaterial is naturally Immortal, and hath no contrary Principles of Corruption within; yet who can aſſure us but God may withdraw his Preſerving Influence; and then our Spirits muſt fall back again into that primitive Nothing, whence they ſprung up into Being by his powerful Word of Command. Or for any thing we know by Natural Light, the other Life as well as this may be a con-

a continued State of Trial, tho' in better Circumſtances, and from which we may fall. It may often happen among departed Souls, what Modern Philoſophers have dreamt doth frequently come to paſs among the Heavenly Bodies, where a Star is many times covered with a riſing Scum, and over-run with ſo thick a Scurf as to be degraded into a wandring Planet, or a Pilgrim Comet, perpetually friſking and bounding from one *Vortex* to another, a long time before its ſurrounding Cruſt being broken it recovers its ancient Eminency again.

But Revelation acquaints us, that the time of our Probation ends with this Life. The *dying* Groans of a Saint are the laſt that ever he ſhall fetch. He ſhall Sin no more, Sorrow no more, be Tempted and Afflicted no more: His Bliſs ſhall continue without any Interruption, and without

without any End. And this, tho' but a Circumſtance, yet is of that Weight that it may juſtly be eſteem'd a conſiderable *Part* of the Happineſs of Heaven, to be ſecured in the Enjoyment of it, without any Fear or Poſſibility of a Change for ever.

§. IV. IV. Natural Light and Reaſon can't aſſure us, That we ſhall enjoy this Happineſs *immediately after our Death.* It ſeems to be too great a *Leap* for ſo very imperfect a Soul as every good Man's is in this Life, to enter upon ſo great a Glory forthwith upon its being diſlodg'd from the Body. We ſee nothing like this in Nature; all Creatures being wont from mean Beginnings gradually to *creep* on to the Height of their Perfection in a leaſurely way, by very ſlow and eaſy Steps. And we have the more reaſon to think it ſhould be

be ſo in the preſent Caſe, becauſe good Men in this World are not wont to improve very faſt in the Divine Life, but ſtill they have many Imperfections adhering to them. And one of the greateſt Signs of their Growth, is to be deeply ſenſible of the Remainders of Corruption which do ſtill hang about them. If the Scriptures be laid aſide, 'tis hardly to be ſuppoſed, that a Soul which has been ſo long in ſo muddy and defiled a Veſſel, can be drawn off from the Body ſo very clear, as to carry *no Dregs* along with it; but that it will need to paſs through a great many Purgations before it be thoroughly refined. And who can tell how ſevere, and how long a Trial it muſt endure before it be qualified to receive, and fitted to bear ſo great a Weight of Glory?

The wiſeſt of the Heathens have thought, that none but thoſe who

have been perfectly * purged in this Life, can go ſtraightway to Heaven: But as for others, it would require a very conſiderable Time to cleanſe them from that Droſs that ſticks to 'em before they can be prepared to enter into it. They have fancied that ſeveral departed Souls did firſt wheel and roll about the Earth for † many Ages. That ſome of 'em, when deliver'd out of the Body, are like poor ‖ Priſoners, who having lain in Irons for a long while, can't preſently feel their Legs, and hardly know how to walk, when their Shackles are off. *Plato* was ſo Extravagant in his Conceits as to affirm, that many of them could not recover their * *Wings* in a leſs Space of Time than *Ten Thouſand*

* Socrates in Platonis Phœdone, p. 80, 113, 114. Plat. Gorgias, p. 526.

† *Tully*'s Somn. Scip.

‖ Tuſc. Qu. l. 1.

* In Phœdro, p. 248, 249.

Years:

Years: But the *Pinions* of ſome Philoſophical Spirits, who were Lovers of Wiſdom and *beautiful Boys*, would grow conſiderably faſter; ſo that in the Compaſs of *Three Thouſand Years* they would be capable of flying upwards. Tho', as *Euſebius* * hath well obſerved, we have nothing but his *bare Word* for all this; and herein, as well as in many other Points, he did notoriouſly Contradict himſelf. For at another time he makes *Socrates* tell us, "They who have committed great "Sins, but yet curable ones, accord-"ing to the Nature of their Crimes, "are caſt into ſeveral Rivers of Fire, "where they lie for a † *Year*, ac-"cording to the Tradition of their "Poets, and then come to a certain "fenny mariſh place, where they "pray to thoſe whom they have in-

* Præp. Evang. l. 13. c. 16.

† In Phœdone, p. 113, 114.

" jured, that they may come forth " and be received into the Manſions " of the Bleſſed. And if their Prayers " prevail with theſe Men, they pre- " ſently are drawn out; but other- " wiſe they muſt lie by it. *Hermago-ras* *, a *Platoniſt*, tells us, Guilty Souls are puniſh'd for infinite Ages before they are deliver'd out of *Tartarus*; and then, when they are ſufficiently purged, they return to Heaven. And *Virgil* ſaith, according to the *Platonick* Notion, that ſome dirty Souls are hung up a drying † and bleaching in the Wind; others which are very foul, are rinſed and ſcoured in the Water; but ſome muſt be caſt into a ſcorching Fire before their

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* In Macrob. in Somn. Scip. l. 2. c. 17.

† ----Aliæ panduntur inanes
Suſpenſæ ad ventos: aliis ſub gurgite vaſto
Infectum eluitur ſcelus, aut exuritur igne, &c.
Æneid. l. 6. v. 740.

Spots

Spots can be clean got out, and they be fitted for a Walk in the *Elyſian* Fields to cool and refreſh themſelves. There is one Saying of *Socrates* that is very fit to be applied to all theſe Fooleries, which *Plato* makes him deliver, even at the end of that very place where he ſpeaks more ſoberly of this Subject than any-where elſe, as far as I have obſerved: tis this: *It may be, O* * *Callicles, theſe may ſeem to thee to be Old Wives Fables, and thou wilt deſpiſe them. And it would not be ſtrange if they were deſpiſed, provided that by all our Search we could any-where find what is better and truer.*

This is not to be found any-where, but by Divine *Revelation*, whereby we know and are ſure, that as ſoon as ever Good Men die, they *ceaſe from their Labours*; When they are *abſent from the Body*, they are *preſent*

* In Platonis Gorgiâ, p. 527.

with the Lord. It is *but departing*, and *being with Chriſt.* Angels receive the diſlodging holy Soul to convoy it into the Seat of the Bleſſed. *How far* it is thither, and *how long* an Angel may be in Wafting a holy Soul to that Place, is uncertain; tho' we may judge the time is but ſhort. *This Day* (ſays Chriſt to the Penitent Thief, when the Day was already far ſpent) *ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe.* And we find that the Angel *Gabriel*, who at the Beginning of *Daniel*'s Prayer had a Divine Order to fly to him, made ſo great a Diſpatch, as to be with him *about the Time of the Evening-Oblation.* Now ſuppoſe that Prayer of *Daniel*'s to begin early in the Morning, (for I will allow him to have been up very betimes at his Devotions, eſpecially on a ſolemn Faſt, as this ſeems to be; yet) from thence till *Three in the Afternoon*, which was about the Time

Dan. 9. 21.

of

of the Evening-Oblation, is but a very few Hours. The Compaſs of Time is but very ſhort, before a holy Soul enters into the Heavenly Paradiſe, after it has left the Body; and it may be it uſually arrives there long before the forſaken Carkaſe is lodged in the Grave, without the trouble of any tedious Delays, or the Hazard of any new Trial, or the Severity of any further Diſcipline.

V. Mere Natural Light and Reaſon cannot Certify us what *Perſons* ſhall enjoy all this Happineſs. If we were left to the wild Gueſſes of our own dim-ſighted Reaſon, we might well ſuppoſe that ſo great a Glory ſhould be confined to a very few ſpecial Favourites, and not lie open for All. Some ſhall be excluded; And every Man that knows himſelf, would have been apt to ſuſpect, Am not I one of that unhappy Number? §. V.

And eſpecially theſe three Sorts of Perſons would.

1. Thoſe that have been *very great Sinners*, either as to the *Heinouſneſs* of their Crimes, or the *Time* of their continuing Impenitent under them. The fabulous and idle Poets indeed have placed the *Dog*, the *Bear* and the *Dragon* in the Heavens (and ſucceeding Aſtronomers have left them in the quiet Poſſeſſion of the Place, ſtill calling the reſpective Conſtellations by thoſe Names;) But that was the effect of a wild and extravagant Fancy. Sober Reaſon will hardly allow that they who in the Courſe of their Lives have long reſembled thoſe Brutes, ſhould upon any Terms be tranſlated thither. The Returning Prodigal doth expreſs the Natural Senſe of ſuch Men, when they prove true Penitents, in that Speech of his to his Father; *I have ſinned againſt Heaven, and before thee, and*

Luk. 15. 19.

am

am unworthy to be called thy Son; make me one of thy hired Servants. The meaneſt Place, the loweſt Office, in thy Family, is too high for me.

But now by *Revelation* we are aſſured that Heaven ſtands open to receive *Publicans and Harlots*, upon their ſincere Converſion. And thoſe *Jews*, that had ſuch a Malignity of Spirit as to contradict and *blaſpheme*, yet had not miſſed of Eternal Life, if they had not thruſt it from them, and *judged themſelves unworthy of it.* Mat. 21. 31. Act. 13. 46.

2. Thoſe that are *mean and poor*, and *unlearned*, and ſuch the Bulk of Mankind is. *Socrates* would have Heaven to be the Peculiar of Elevated and Refined * Philoſophical Spirits. As for thoſe that have been notorious for Gluttony, and Wantonneſs, and injuring others, he tells us

* In Platonis Phœdone, p. 81, 82.

their

their Souls, when the Men die, paſs into ſuch Brutes, whoſe Manners they did moſt nearly expreſs in their Lives and Actions. As ſuppoſe into Goats, Aſſes, or the like. He is indeed a little civiller to the good honeſt *Moral* Men, as they call 'em, who have been famous for Temperance and Juſtice, which they have acquired by the *dull way of Cuſtom and Thought*, but have not arrived to in the more exalted Method of Philoſophical Precepts and Diſcipline. For he allows they may be transformed into Bees, and Waſps, and Ants; or it may be ſome of them may put on an Human Shape again, and make a new Sett of Indifferent Men.

But the *Souldiers* are wont to carry all before them here below, and they hope to do ſo above. The * *Celtiberi*, *Hiſpani* and *Cimbri* and the *Dru-*

* Cluverii Germ. Antiq. l. 1. c. 32. p. 221.

ids

ids thought that they who died Valiantly in the Field, ſhould have the higheſt Place in Heaven. And *Julian* *, who may reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be well acquainted with the People of that Country where he had ſo ſucceſsfully managed a War, tells us, this very Perſwaſion made the Old *Germans* behave themſelves ſo Couragiouſly in the Field. For my own part, if it had been my Work to have Billeted them, I ſhould never have Aſſigned them their *Quarters* in Heaven, who generally make every place where they come to be a Hell upon Earth. But *Titus* † the *Roman* Emperor carries it ſo far, that 'tis not to be endured. For in his Speech to his Souldiers, he tells them that Valiant Men who die in the Field, ſhall climb up to the Stars; but Cowardly

* In Cæſaribus, p. 39, 40.

† Joſephus de Bell. Jud. l. 7. c. 4.

Fellows,

Fellows who die by a Diſeaſe, tho' *every blot of wickedneſs be wiped away from them, ſhall* ſink down Beneath. *Plato* * is more moderate, he would *have all Men who excel in Virtue*, whether they died through Age, or any other way, advanced to be *Dæmons* in the other State; but he gives the upper hand to thoſe who die with their Swords in their Hands, and ſell their Lives to their Enemies at a dear rate. *Tully* would have Heaven to be the Reward of the Brave and Publick † Spirited-men, who have been very ſerviceable to their Country by diſpatching a Tyrant out of the way, or ſome ſuch Heroical Action. Eſpecially, if to the *Political and Active* Virtues, there be but added the *Idle* ‖ ones, as *Macrobius* calls them,

* De Repub. l. 5. p. 468.

† Somn. Scipionis.

‖ Macrob. in Somn. Scip. l. 1. c. 4. It. l. 2. c. 17.

i. e.

i. e. the *Contemplative* and *Philoſophical* ones.

And we, it may be, might be apt to think it very likely, that ſome of the great Monarchs of this World, if they employ their Authority and Power for God's Honour; ſome of the Rich Men, that uſe their great Eſtates; or ſome of the Wiſe and Learned ones of this World, who improve their Wit, and Parts, and great Knowledge, for the propagating his Cauſe, and ſpreading his Intereſt, may be thus amply rewarded by him: But as for poor unlearned Men, how little can they do for him, who are but as the Duſt of the Ballance, that hath not Weight enough to turn the Scales, either this way or that; and therefore cannot, with any Modeſty, expect to receive very much from him; eſpecially ſince they find that God gives them ſo *very little* of the good Things of this Life?

Life? And if Scripture be laid aſide, the only Rule is the Goodneſs of God, and the Effects of his Bounty and Providence: And thereupon theſe Men might well fear, that he who gives them theſe lower Bleſſings with ſo ſparing a Hand, would not beſtow thoſe infinitely greater ones upon them.

But now by *Revelation* we are aſſured, That thoſe inconſiderable Men, whom their Fellow-Creatures would ſcorn to look upon, may come to ſee the Face of God: They, whom their rich Neighbours would
Job 30. 1. diſdain to place among *the Dogs of their Flock*, may ſit down and Feaſt with Angels. And this is ſo unlikely to bare Reaſon, that the Apoſtle *James* might well uſher it in with that
Jam. 2. 5. ſolemn Preface, of, *Hearken my beloved Brethren, has not God choſen the Poor in this World, rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom?* Yea, Chriſt aſſures

assures us, That those Men stand fairest for that blessed Place: He never said so Severe a thing concerning any Poor Man, as he did of all the Rich, That *it is easier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for them to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Matth. 19. 24.

3. Those that are eminently Holy and Serious. For the better Men are, the more sensible they are of their own Vileness, and unworthiness of Heaven, tho' at the same time they are the more desirous of being admitted into it.

§. VI. VI. Natural Light and Reason cannot assure us what the *Terms* are, upon which this Blessedness may be ours. Astronomers have not invented more Imaginary Lines in the Heavens, than we should have been contriving fanciful ways to have brought us thither. That *Repentance*, and

persevering

perſevering Holineſs, are neceſſary, is obvious at the very firſt ſight: But the Doubt is, whether theſe are Sufficient. To ſay nothing of the Juſtice of God, it ſeems inconſiſtent with the Divine Wiſdom to require no more than theſe. For all prudent Governors are always wont to obſerve a Proportion between the Rewards that are offered, and thoſe Services for which they are propoſed; even the higheſt Generoſity muſt, in ſome meaſure, be conducted by this Rule, or elſe it degenerates into Extravagance and Folly. For the propoſing vaſt Recompences for very ſlight and trivial Matters, betrays great Want of Judgment, in not ſetting a true value upon things, either upon Rewards, or Services, or both.

Now, by the Law of our Creation we owe God all poſſible Duty and Obedience, a great deal more than the beſt of us do yield to him: And

And ſhould God have exacted it on the Account of his Sovereign Authority over us, without promiſing us any thing at all, much leſs any great Matters; we had been indiſpenſably obliged to it. And our beſt Actions ſtand in need of *Pardon*, ſo far are they from deſerving to be Crowned. Nothing in us, or done by us, can bear the leaſt Proportion to the Heavenly Glory. And therefore, that beſides a Pardon, God ſhould promiſe us Eternal Life as the Reward of what we do for him, is what can hardly enter into our Thoughts.

But now Revelation does relieve us in this Matter. The Scriptures tell us, That Chriſt, by his perfect Obedience and Death, in our room and ſtead, hath highly Glorified God, and his Government; and not only redeemed us from Hell and Deſtruction, to which we were lia-

ble, but alſo merited Everlaſting Glory for us: And that the Deſign of this whole Affair, is, to magnify the Riches of God's Grace, and ſhow the vaſt Regard he has to the Death and Interceſſion of his own Son, that on *his Account* he offers ſuch an unſpeakable Reward to us; *That as Sin has reigned unto Death, ſo might Grace reign through Righteouſneſs to Eternal Life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* It is not for any *Works of Righteouſneſs that we have done*, or can do; it is not becauſe of their Intrinſick Worth, that ſuch great Things are given to us. Heaven is the Purchaſe of Chriſt's Blood, it is for *His* Sake we are accepted and rewarded: And ſo upon our Faith and Obedience, we freely receive the Bleſſings which he hath merited: And the more we abound therein, the greater is our Reward, not becauſe of our Merits, but becauſe of God's gracious Promiſe,

Rom. 5. 12.

and

and Reſpect to the Blood of his Son; for which he aſſigns us different Degrees of Glory, in Proportion to our different Meaſures of Holineſs and Obedience.

VII. I ſhall add one Conſideration more, which will equally reach both this, and the foregoing Head, *viz.* Natural Light and Reaſon cannot aſſure us *where Grace* is to be had to enable us to perform the Terms, on which the Pardon of Sin, and the Enjoyment of the Heavenly Glory is ſuſpended. Whoſoever conſults himſelf, the Vanity of his own Mind, the Corruption of his own Heart, the Turbulency of his Paſſions, the unrulineſs of his Appetite, the Strength of Temptations, the Weakneſs of his Reſolutions, and the Force of Evil Examples, will quickly ſee an abſolute Neceſſity of a Divine Power to turn §. VII.

him into and keep him in the Paths of Holineſs. Some Ingenious Men tell us very ſtrange and ſurprizing Stories of the mighty Strength of Wheels, and Pullies, and Screws; that 'tis poſſible by the Multiplication of them to pull up an Oak by the Roots with a ſingle * Hair of a Man's Head, lift it up with a Straw, or blow it up with ones Breath. So that by theſe Contrivances one of *Sampſon*'s Locks when ſhaven off, would have had far greater Strength, and done greater Wonders than he himſelf when all of them were on. As Extravagant as this may ſeem to be, yet 'tis much more eaſy and likely, than for any Man by his own feeble Arm to pluck up thoſe inveterate Evil Habits, which Time and Cuſtom have ſettled in him, and made natural to him. Now what well-grounded Con-

* Biſhop *Wilkin*'s *Archimedes*, p. 96.

fidence

fidence can we have from the meer Light of Nature, of Divine Help for the accompliſhing this great and neceſſary Work? Whether any ſhall ever enjoy it; ſeeing the ſame Sins that make us need it, render us moſt unworthy of it? Or in what *Proportions* it ſhall be given forth, and how *long* it ſhall be continued? Whether the Spirit of God ſhall be like thoſe *Periodical Winds*, which in ſome Parts of the World do *annually* blow to help the Mariner forward in the purſuit of his gainful Voyage; or whether it ſhall only be like that *bright Minute* which Aſtrologers tell us of, that comes but *once* in the whole Compaſs of a Man's Life, and which if he lazily let ſlip, he ſhall never have ſuch another, but is doom'd to Miſery by a Fatal Neceſſity all the remainder of his Days?

But the *Chriſtian* Inſtitution is pe-
2 Cor. 3. culiarly called the *Miniſtration of the*
8, &c. *Spirit*, as contra-diſtinguiſh'd from the Judaical one, tho' that alſo had God for its Author; ſo ſmall a Portion of it was given forth under the one, like little Drops of the *Dew* from Heaven which juſt wets the Ground; in Compariſon of what is beſtowed under the other, like a plentiful Shower of Rain from above that abundanly Waters it. It was in the *New Creation* as in the *Old*. The cold and dark *Evening* went before the warm and bright *Morning*; and God appointed the *leſſer Light to Rule the Night*, and the *greater* one to govern the Day. The *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation like the *Moon* had its *Glory* and its *Influence* on theſe lower Bodies. But the Goſpel is like the *Sun*, who may with more reaſon than any thing which ſome Ancient Philoſophers dreamt of, be called the

Soul

Soul of the World, whoſe bright and warm Beams give a new Life and Being to all things here below, awaken the ſleepy and drowſy Spirit in every Creature, and cauſe the Fruits of the Ground to Spring up and flouriſh, and Crown the Year with an abundant Increaſe.

Therefore our Bleſſed Saviour ſtiles himſelf the *Light of the World*; Joh. 8. 12. a Title which he doth deſerve, becauſe of the Objects that he hath informed us of; having ſet thoſe *Old* Truths which before were but darkly apprehended, in a full and clear Light; and acquainted us with thoſe *New* ones, which had it not been for him, we had for ever remained Igrant of. And he doth deſerve it no leſs, becauſe of that Vital Influence with which his Heavenly Doctrine is accompanied; without which all Knowledge in our Minds would be but like decayed Drugs, which tho'

taken into our Bodies, having loſt all their Virtue, never operate upon them; nay, Men could not act worſe, if they verily believed, or knew thoſe Doctrines to be falſe, than they do now they believe and know them to be true. His *Light is the Life* of Men; *Wherefore he ſaith, Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the Dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee Light.* And by the Scriptures we are certified, that God hath appointed his own Son to be his High Almoner to diſtribute this Royal Gift of his among us his needy Creatures. That being God and Man, he hath the Infinite Goodneſs of the one, and the tender Bowels of the other united in him. And he hath not only the Kindneſs of an Ordinary Man, but his Humane Nature was filled with a Spirit of Love and Compaſſion; and therefore he who hath ſo ſtrictly commanded us to deal forth

Joh. 1. 4.
Epheſ. 5. 14.

our Bread, and draw out our Souls to the hungry, will be much more ready to do it himſelf. The Woman of *Samaria*, tho' none of the beſt Temper or Character, who denied him a Draught of Common Water, might have had the Water of Life from him, if ſhe had but ſeriouſly *asked* it of him. And tho' the Hearts of his Country-men the *Jews* were full of Malice againſt him, yet from a Cuſtom that had obtained among them of bringing Water from *Siloam* to the Temple, and pouring it out there, he takes Occaſion to intimate to them that He was the Fountain of Saving-Grace, and gives them an Univerſal Invitation, ſaying, *If any man*, tho' he be never ſo poor, or hath been never ſo wicked, yet if he *thirſt*, *let him come to me and drink.* And aſſures them that they ſhould not repair to him in vain. For he adds; *He that believeth on me,*

Iſa. 58. 10.

Joh. 4. 10.

Joh. 7. 37.

38.

as

as the Scripture hath ſaid, out of his Belly ſhall flow Rivers of living Water. This ſpake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him ſhould receive, as St. *John*, the infallible Commentator, adds. And there are ſeveral Circumſtances of this Speech of his which the Evangeliſt mentions, and are worthy of our Obſervation: *In the laſt Day, that great Day of the Feaſt, Jeſus ſtood and cried, ſaying, If any man thirſt,* &c. 'Tis the Feaſt of Tabernacles that is here meant, one of the three on which all the Males in *Iſrael* were to appear at *Jeruſalem*; the Firſt and the Laſt Days whereof were *Great* Days, and in a Special manner to be obſerved as a holy Convocation, wherein it was not Lawful for them to follow their Worldly Employments. And conſequently this being a Day of Leiſure, there was the greater Confluence of the People. And it being the *Laſt* Day, and they on the Point of

of departing to their ſeveral Homes; juſt as they were going he utters theſe Words, that ſo they might ſtick and abide by them as mens laſt Speeches are wont to do. And then 'tis added that *Jeſus ſtood up*. The uſual way among the *Jews* was for thoſe who taught the People to do it *Sitting*; but here we find our Saviour choſe the other Poſture, that his Voice might reach the further. And he did not faintly Whiſper, but he *Cried*, that every one there might be ſure to hear him; and that by the Loudneſs and Fervency of his Delivery he might make the greater Impreſſion upon their Souls. So earneſtly did he deſire to draw Men to him for their Spiritual Advantage.

And as a *Sanative Vertue* was ſent forth from the Body of Chriſt here on Earth for the Curing the Natural Diſtempers of all thoſe who reſorted to him, and believed on him; ſo

ſhall

ſhall Influences of Grace flow forth from him in Heaven for the healing the Spiritual Diſeaſes of thoſe who ſeek to him and depend upon him. He will do as great Miracles and Cures on Mens Souls, as ever he did on their Bodies. Open the Eyes of them who were Born blind: quicken them who are dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins: reſtore their Feet to them that are Lame; cleanſe them that are Lepers, and caſt out the unclean Spirits from thoſe who have been poſſeſſed by them.

And to remove all Jealouſies and Obſtructions, he hath given us ſuch a Deſcription of the Gracious Nature and Will of God, as is moſt worthy of him, and moſt proper to incline us to return to him; to awaken the Negligent, and encourage the Doubting. He hath clearly inform'd us of his Holineſs, Juſtice and Omniſcience, as a Remedy againſt the vain and fatal Imagi-

nations

nations of thoſe who are ſecure in Sin, and are apt to fancy him like a *drowzy* Judge on the Bench, who neither hears nor regards how Cauſes go. He hath as fully diſplay'd before us the Riches of his Grace, that awaken'd Sinners might not deſpair, and ſo prove obſtinate and irreclaimable. It was the Reproach of the *Iſraelites*, that they *changed the Glory of God into the Similitude of an Ox that eateth Graſs.* 'Tis of a more pernicious Conſequence to transform him into the Likeneſs of a *roaring Lion*; thirſting after Mens Blood, and greedy to devour their Souls. Our Bleſſed Saviour, in purſuance of his great Deſign, which is to recover Men from Sin, hath given us quite other Repreſentations of him: That he is deſirous to be at Peace, and ready to give forth of his Grace: That the moſt tender-hearted Father can't be half ſo ready to give Bread to his Starving

Pſ. 106. 20.

Luk. 11. 11, 12, 13.

Starving Child, as God is to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him. And to cut off all Objections to this purpoſe, *viz.* how can God conſiſtently with his Holineſs, Juſtice, and the Honour of his Government, beſtow ſo rich a Bleſſing on us? the Scriptures further tell us, it was one End of his Death to purchaſe Saving-Grace for us. It was part of the Prize for which he ran, a Branch of that

Heb. 12. 2. *Joy that was ſet before him*, as an Encouragement to *him to endure the Croſs, and deſpiſe the Shame*, and Pain of it. He knew he ſhould have *a Seed*, and

Iſa. 53. 10, 11. *ſee the Travel of his Soul, and be ſatisfied* with the bleſſed Fruit thereof.

Pſ. 68. 8. And *when he aſcended up on High, he received Gifts for Men*, indefinitely of all Sorts and Ranks, yea even *for the*

Acts 5. 31. *Rebellious* alſo; and was *exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give Repentance to Iſrael, and Forgiveneſs of Sins.* Yea, ſaith the Apoſtle to thoſe Men whoſe

whoſe Hands were yet reaking in the Blood of Chriſt, and who therefore, one would think, ſhould never have been applied unto; or if they had, of all Men living they ſhould have been the *Laſt* that ever ſhould have heard ſuch glad Tidings; yet on the contrary, *Unto you Firſt*, ſaith he, *God having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, hath ſent him to bleſs you in turning*, not a few only, but *every one of you from his Iniquities.* Acts 3. 26.

Conſidering the Nature of the Goſpel, the Repreſentation therein given of God, the Temper of Chriſt, his tender Love to the Souls of Men, which drew him down from Heaven; his Carriage on Earth, his Death, Aſcenſion, Exaltation, and the Ends of them; which he who did not ſtick at the hardeſt Command of his Father, that of laying down his Life, will be ſure punctually to anſwer; and his own Honour, which is ſo deeply engaged,

the

Prov. 14. 28. *the Glory of a King* conſiſting ſo much *in the Multitude of his Subjects*, we have the higheſt Reaſon to believe, that nothing is more Grateful to him, than the lifting up a periſhing Sinner out of the Pit, and the helping a ſtrayed Soul in its Return to God.

The

The CLOSE.

I Cannot Conclude without making a little Reflection upon what has been ſaid. And,

1. How ſhould we love, and value, and adhere to, the Goſpel of Chriſt, and the Bleſſed Author of ſuch a Revelation! How are Writers eſteemed, who treat of Matters which are of very great Uſe and Service to Mankind, in the things of this Life; And what a Price do Men ſet upon thoſe Books, wherein Difficulties are cleared up, and thoſe profitable Inventions are contained. Now what is there of ſo great Importance, as Pardon of Sin, and Immortal Life, the Doctrine whereof is encumber'd with ſo many Difficulties, which are too hard for Natural Light and Reaſon; but are ſo clear-

ly, plainly, and fully, Solved by the Holy Scriptures? How are Men pleaſed with an exact Deſcription of a Foreign Country, tho' they do not ſo much as dream of dwelling in it, nor have any thoughts or hopes of having ſo much as *one Foot of Land* there! How then ſhould we value the Goſpel, that gives us ſo full and plain an Account of the Heavenly Country, and how we may be poſſeſſed of all the Glory of it! What an Eſteem have ingenious Men for a Book of *Aſtronomy*, that gives an Account of the orderly Motions of the Sun, Moon, and Stars! What an happy Invention is that of thoſe Glaſſes, whereby they diſcover ſome leſſer Bodies, which the naked and unaſſiſted Eye is not able to perceive; tho' thereby they have no more Benefit from their Light and Influence, than thoſe who are the moſt ignorant of theſe Affairs. How

ſhould

ſhould we value the Sacred Oracles, which do diſcover the Heavenly State to us, which is not to be known by mere Reaſon; and how we may ſo order our own Motions, as to get above, and out-ſhine any of thoſe glorious Luminaries. Let us adhere to the Bible; for if once we give up that, we are off from our Center, we ſhall find nothing whereon our Soul can reſt, but ſhall be at our Wits-end. Methinks that Courtier ſpoke like a Man of Senſe to the Pagan King *Edwin*, whilſt he was conſidering whether he had beſt to turn Chriſtian, or no, when he ſaid thus to him: * *The preſent Life of Man upon Earth, Sir, if compared with that Time which is to us unknown, ſeems to me to reſemble a little Sparrow; which, while your Majeſty was feaſting within with*

* *Bede's* Eccleſ. Hiſt. Gentis Angl. l. 2. cap. 13.

your Royal Retinue in your warm Parlour, during the roaring of the bluſtering Winds, and the falling of great Quantities of Rain and Snow without, flew in at one Door, and preſently flew out at another. All the time it was in the Houſe, it was well ſhelter'd from Wind and Weather: but as ſoon as it got out into the cold Air, we were altogether as ignorant whither it went, as we were, whence it came. Thus we can give ſome Account of our Soul during its Abode in the Body, while it was houſed and harboured therein: but where it was Before, and how it fares with it Afterwards, is to us altogether unknown. If therefore Paulinus (he was the Chriſtian Biſhop who laboured to Convert thoſe Heathens) *by his Preaching can certainly inform us herein, he deſerves, in my Opinion, to be followed.* And the King, after he had heard *Paulinus*'s Sermon, ſpoke like an Underſtanding Man, when he ſaid, *I have long ago been convinced*

convinced that the Idols we have Worſhipped were meer Nothings; becauſe the more diligently I have ſought for the Truth in this way of Religion, ſo much the farther was I from finding it. But now I openly profeſs, that by this Preaching, the way of obtaining Eternal Life and Happineſs is clearly laid before us. Whereupon he immediately gave Orders for the Demoliſhing the Heathen Temples and Altars.

2. Let us take heed that we do not fall ſhort of Pardon and Heaven. Sad was the Caſe of that wicked and prophane Lord at *Samaria*, who barely *ſaw* the great Plenty with his Eyes, but never taſted of it; he ſtood at the Gate to let in others, but was trampled to Death by the Multitude preſſing in upon him. Much worſe will be our Caſe, if we only hear of the great Proviſion which God has made for us in the other State,

and never feed upon it, but be trodden down to Hell in the Crowd of our own unpardoned Sins. It is a double Miſery, to be drowned within ſight of Shore; to miſs of that Pardon, and of that Heaven, that are ſo plainly revealed, and of which we have heard ſo much, and ſo often.

3. Let us clear up our Right and Title to both of them. How long have we remained in Doubts and Fears? and ſhall we always continue in that uneaſy Poſture, like a Door on its Hinges, moving this way and that, but ſtill hanging in the ſame Place where it was many Years ago?

To clear up our Right, 'tis neceſſary that the following Rules be obſerv'd.

(1.) Don't give Way to immoderate *Worldly Sorrow*. If we be like a Carkaſs that lies under the Weight of that Earth which preſſes upon it, and

and never ſtirs Hand or Foot to help it ſelf: If we lie down under our Burdens, only mourning, and complaining, and indulging our ſelves in black and gloomy Thoughts; we can never expect that God ſhould help us; eſpecially, if we do worſe than this, if we ſinfully afflict our ſelves, we can't reaſonably hope that God ſhould comfort us, and raiſe up them who madly caſt or bow themſelves down. If with our own Hands we plunge the Dagger into our Breaſt, it would be a Miracle if we did not loſe our Blood and Spirits, faint, and feel a great deal of Pain. They that will chew upon nothing but *Wormwood and Gall*, and delight in rolling it up and down in their Mouths, are likely to walk in the *Bitterneſs* of their Souls all their Days.

(2.) Watch againſt the Encroachments of *Bodily Melancholy*. This na-

turally diſpoſes a Man to Fears and Jealouſies, is the black Root of many idle but vexatious Scruples and perverſe Cavillings, and will make him *refuſe to be comforted*, tho' there be ever ſo great Reaſon for it. If a Stander-by convince him of ſome ſaving Work of God on his Soul, and of his Right to Pardon and Eternal Life; yet as ſoon as he is gone, all is undone again: the Melancholy Chriſtian being like a *faulty Watch*, which may be wound up and go a little, while ones Hand is upon it; but no ſooner is that removed off, but it runs down in an Inſtant, and ſtands ſtill again. When ſuch meet with Worldly Croſſes, (from which none are exempted) it caſts them into deep Fits of Sorrow, which in a Serious Perſon preſently runs into dreadful and amazing Fears about his Soul, and the ſuppoſed miſerable and forlorn State thereof. As *Peter*, when he

he was over-ſhadowed with a *Bright Cloud*; ſo any other of the Diſciples of Chriſt when cover'd with a *Black* one, are apt to ſpeak *they know not what*, eſpecially againſt themſelves. All proper *Natural Means* therefore muſt be made uſe of to ſubdue and keep under this evil Humour, which is ſo great an Enemy to a Life both of Grace and Peace. Luke 9. 33.

(3.) Be skilful, diligent, and ſerious in *Examining* and *Obſerving your ſelves*. We muſt diſtinctly know the Marks and Characters of thoſe that ſhall be pardoned and ſaved according to the Scriptures. We muſt underſtand how methodically to go to Work, to find whether they are in us or no. We muſt narrowly obſerve the main drift of our Actions, and the ſecret Springs, Ends, and Principles, of all that we do; and deal by our own Hearts, as Learned Men by an Obſcure and Profound Author,

or

or an ill-written and blotted Manuſcript, which they carefully read over again and again, with a very curious and critical Eye, that they may rightly and thoroughly underſtand them. And unleſs we do this, we ſhall never be able to attain to any ſolid and ſtable Comfort.

(4.) Be much in the *Exerciſe of Grace*, and endeavour daily to *grow* in it. Grace in the Habit, is like Fire in the Flint or Steel; which is not diſcern'd, but by the Colliſion of one againſt the other with ſome Force and Strength; nor the good Principle in the Heart, but as it ſallies forth into vigorous and lively Exerciſe in the Life. Stir up the ſleepy Habit, blow up the Heavenly Spark into a bright Flame, and thine own Eyes ſhall ſee it, and thy own Soul ſhall feel the warmth of it, and thou wilt be no longer in perplexing Doubts concerning it.

(5.) *Laſtly*,

(5.) *Laſtly*, Be more exact and circumſpect in your Walk.

Bring Matters to *an Head*, ſee what it is, that is the Cauſe of your Jealouſies and Fears, ſome Sin of Omiſſion or Commiſſion; and deſtroy the Root, as ever you would have no more of this bitter Fruit. If you do theſe things you ſhall no longer ſuffer any dark Eclipſes; or if you ſhould, they will be but ſhort ones, and you will preſently emerge out of them; you will live in Comfort, and die in Peace. You will have no Temptation to cleave to this World, when God calls you away; like *green Fruit*, that *ſticks* to that Tree whereon it grows, and muſt be violently plucked and torn thence: But you will depart with great Freedom and Willingneſs, be like *Ripe Fruit*, that preſently and eaſily

Drops

Drops from the Tree whereon it does but looſely hang: And *an entrance will be adminiſtred to you abundantly into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour.*

AN

AN APPENDIX TO THE Foregoing Diſcourſe.

AMONG other Letters in Mr. *Blount's* Collection, I find one written by *A. W.* who threatens Revealed Religion with a *Regular* Attack in a Syllogiſtical Way, which he is not over-skilful in. For when he comes to prove the Major Propoſition of his firſt Syllogiſm, which is an *Affirmative*, and which according to the Rules of *Art*, ſhould be the Concluſion of the ſecond; inſtead of that, he ſubſtitutes a *Negative*; §. 1.

tive; and beſides, he ſhuffles that which was the *Subject* in the Former into the room of the *Predicate* in the Latter. For this is the *Major* of the firſt Syllogiſm. * *That Rule which is neceſſary for our Future Happineſs, ought to be generally made known to all.* And this is the Concluſion of the ſecond Syllogiſm, whereby he proves it, *viz. Therefore that Rule which is not generally known, cannot be the Rule of our Happineſs.* So that I ſuppoſe his *Religion*, and his *Logick*, are of apiece, both *meerly Natural.*

But that which he would be at, is this, That *no Revealed Religion has been* (nay, he is ſo very bold, as to ſay it *never could be*) *made known to all Men, as it certainly would have been, if it were neceſſary to Future Happineſs; elſe there is no viſible means for the greater*

* *Oracles of Reaſon*, p. 198.

part

part of Mankind to be happy; which is inconſiſtent with God's Infinite Goodneſs, who provides for all his Creatures the means of attaining that Happineſs wherof their Natures are capable.

I ſhall ſpeak more largely to this Point than is neceſſary for a ſufficient Anſwer to the Objection. Partly, becauſe I will endeavour to reconcile the Minds of Men in ſome meaſure to this hard Problem of not granting the Goſpel to ſo great a Part of Mankind: Partly becauſe I am not altogether without Hopes, that it will fare with *A. W.* as with that Man in the Goſpel, who was once *Mad*, and Poſſeſſed with an *Evil Spirit*, but quickly after being in *his right Mind*, ſate *at the Feet of Jeſus* as an humble Diſciple of his. It will be ſo, if he will ſtand to his Word; for he ſays, *It has been demanded of me* *, *whe-*

Luke 8. 35.

* Page 210.

ther

ther I ſhould be convinc'd of my Opinion, and admit of Supernatural Religion, in caſe the Goſpel, i. e. *a Supernatural Religion had been promulgated to all the World? I anſwer'd, I ſhould; and was contented the whole Streſs of the Diſpute ſhould be terminated in that One Point.* I therefore offer the following Conſiderations...

§. II. 1. The Caſe of Man is very different from that of all other Creatures, becauſe he is manifeſtly in a State of Apoſtacy, which this Author himſelf confeſſes to be * *generally acknowledged.* Now the Divine Goodneſs was abundantly manifeſted in the Original framing of Man in a Capacity for Happineſs; and abundantly providing him with Furniture for the attaining of it. But he voluntarily fell from that good Eſtate

* Page 207.

by

by his own Default: God therefore is not juſtly chargeable, if he ſhould leave all Mankind in their Deſerved and Self-procured Miſery, and never have ſet on foot in any Place of the World a Deſign of ſaving any Man. This is not a Matter of *Right*, which fallen Man can challenge as due to him; it may be with-held without any Wrong or Cruelty, becauſe 'tis a Matter of pure Arbitrary undeſerved Favour.

2. This Revealed Religion, which is generally neceſſary to the attaining everlaſting Happineſs, and which he ſays NEVER COULD, I ſay both *could* and *would* have been univerſally known, had it not been for the groſs *Negligence*, *Wickedneſs*, and *Malice of Men themſelves*. For God preached it to *Adam* immediately after the Fall; as alſo to *Noah*, the two Common Parents of all Mankind. *Adam* had the Goſpel in

Miniature, in theſe Words, *The Seed of the Woman ſhall break the Serpent's Head.* And we have great Reaſon to believe, that what was wrapt up in theſe very General Terms, was more particularly unfolded to him, than it is here recorded. For it is evident, That *Moſes* ſtudies Brevity, and gives an Hiſtorical Account of a great many Ages and Events, within the narrow Compaſs of a few Pages. And there was the leſs need that he ſhould in *this place* further Dilate upon the *Meſſiah*, a ſhort Hint was enough, becauſe that was the Subject which he was more fully to open in his following Writings.

And it is highly probable, That our firſt Parents did underſtand ſomewhat of the *Death* of Chriſt as a Sacrifice, which is the Marrow and Subſtance, the Sum and Center of the Goſpel, and the Foundation-

tion-Stone of all our Hopes of Pardon and Salvation. This may be ſtrongly inferr'd from *Abel*'s Sacrifice, and God's Acceptance of it. The cutting in pieces of God's good Creatures, in whoſe Make and Frame there are ſo many Prints of a Divine Power and Wiſdom; the pouring out of their Blood, the burning of their Fat, *&c.* This cannot be accounted for as a Reaſonable Service, but only as it ſerved to keep up in Mens minds a Senſe of the heinous Nature and Deſert of Sin; of the Juſtice of God, who would not Pardon without a Sacrifice, and yet of his Mercy at the ſame time, which was a Foundation of Hope to the Sinner, in as much as he would accept the Life of a Beaſt in lieu of the Offender; but principally as Sacrifices were Types and Figures of the Death of the *Promiſed Seed*, who in due time was to put away Sin by

the offering of himſelf. This Cuſtom was ſpread over all the World; and it cannot be imagined how All Men, in all Ages, and in all Places, ſhould have agreed upon this as a principal Part of Divine Worſhip; but only that it deſcended to them by Tradition from the firſt Father of Mankind. But how inexcuſable was it in them to receive the Shell, and drop the Kernel; to retain the outward Rite and Sign, but loſe the great Thing ſignified thereby; without which the outward Act looks like a Barbarous one, unworthy of God to accept, and of Man to offer; ſo that he that made the Oblation, ſeemed to be as brutiſh as the very *Beaſt* that he ſlew?

And no doubt but *Adam*, and other Holy Men, did communicate what Knowledge they had of the *Meſſiah* to their Children, as they in all

all Reaſon ſhould have done to thoſe that were deſcended from them. *Noah* is expreſly called a *Preacher of Righteouſneſs*: And did he warn the World of the *Flood*, and can any one think he would ſpeak nothing of the Promiſed *Seed*? *Enoch* ſpake of *Chriſt*, and of his appearing to the Deſtruction of the Wicked; and no doubt but he ſpake alſo of his firſt and ſecond Appearing for the Salvation of the Righteous. *Zacharias* tells us, That God ſpake of the Redeemer *by the Mouth of his Holy Prophets which have been ſince the World began.* And if they were Good Men, they muſt needs ſpeak, eſpecially to their *own Families*, concerning him.

2 Pet. 2. 5. Jude 5. 14. Luke 1. 70.

And ſo much of the Doctrine concerning Chriſt, as was abſolutely neceſſary *in thoſe Days*, lay within a very narrow Room, *viz. That Man was in a fallen State*, and this they

could not but know and feel: And that *God had promiſed to reſcue them from it by ſome Extraordinary Perſon, who ſhould be ſent to this purpoſe in due time; and all that truſted in him, and through him returned to God and their Duty, ſhould be pardoned*, and *ſaved by him.* And was this ſuch a *Load* to their Memories? Is a *Jewel* a Burden to a Man that carries it about him? Does the pained Man feel the Smart of his Wound, and forget the Healing-plaiſter; eſpecially when the Blood is trickling down every Day, and there is not a long Parentheſis between the Returns of his ſharp Fits, at the diſtance of many Years, but he has a continual Monitor of it, as they had of their Miſery and need of a Remedy? Was it an unreaſonable *hard* Task for the Father to teach, or the Son to learn ſo Short a Leſſon as this is; eſpecially conſidering that then the Life of

of Man was not ſhut up in ſuch narrow Limits, as now it is? The Cloth is now *ſhrunk* up to Three-ſcore Years and Ten, but then it was ſtretched out to ſeveral Hundred: A very fair time ſure, for both Maſter and Scholar. A Learned * Man has well obſerved, That the Longevity of thoſe Patriarchs, with whom this Leſſon was depoſited, and who were to take care that it might be preſerved inviolable, was a very great Advantage: For three of them alone filled up the firſt Period of 1656 Years, from the Creation to the Flood, *viz. Adam*, *Methuſelah*, and *Noah*. And Four of the Fathers after the Flood, tho' the extent of their Lives was then ſhortened, fell in with the 856 Years from the Flood, to the giving of the Law by *Moſes*; and in him we have freſh

* Dr. *William's* 2d Serm. of *Revel.* p. 8, 9.

Information about the Promiſed Meſſiah.

But if their Days had been much Shorter, and the Leſſon much Harder and Longer; yet it ſhould have been ſtudied with the greateſt Application of Mind, as is uſual in all Arts and Sciences, which are of an infinitely Inferior Nature. *They* tend to a Mans comfortable living in this World; But the Doctrine of the Promiſed Meſſiah, was what their Eternal Welfare was wrapt up in; And ſo was that of their Children too. And therefore conſidering that Love to Themſelves, and to their Poſterity, which is ſo very deeply engraven on the Souls of Men; ſuch a Doctrine ſhould have been diligently and affectionately taught, readily learned, fixedly retained, and carefully tranſmitted down from Age to Age; they ſhould ſooner have forgotten their own *Names*, than have forgotten that.

Cardan

Cardan * ſpeaking of one who had a Receipt that would ſuddenly and certainly diſſolve the Stone in the Bladder, concludes of him, That *without doubt that Man is in Hell, becauſe he never Revealed it to any before he died.* The Sentence, I confeſs, is ſomewhat ſevere; but as a Lover of Mankind, a Man can hardly forbear to think the ſame, even tho' neither He, nor His, were ever troubled with that moſt afflictive of all bodily Diſtempers. But if this Man had by his own Wickedneſs contracted, and then tranſmitted that Diſeaſe to his Children, and knew it would run down from him in a Blood to his Childrens Children to the End of the World; if yet he had not revealed ſo rare a Secret to his own Offſpring, that they might be freed from

* Baxter's *Saints Reſt, Part* 3. *Ch.* 13.

that

that racking Torment in this World, which he had brought upon them; ſuch wretched ill Nature did deſerve to be puniſhed with Everlaſting Torments in the other State.

All this being conſidered, one would think it were Impoſſible but that the Subſtance of Revealed Religion ſhould have been tranſmitted, and a ſufficient Knowledge of it diffuſed every-where, and been propagated together with the Humane Nature. And ſo it would, had it not been for moſt inexcuſable Negligence and Perverſneſs, moſt amazing Folly and Madneſs. God has not been wanting to Men, but Men have been moſt unaccountably wanting to Themſelves and their Children. Now by what Law is God obliged, in a miraculous Manner, to reſtore a fair Eſtate to a Family, when one was ſetled upon it, and has been very wickedly and fooliſhly embezzled?

zled? Or to make Corn ſpring out of the Earth, when Men refuſe to Plow their Ground, and throw away their Seed?

But leaſt of all, could this have been reaſonably expected, either by the Men of the Old, or thoſe of the New World. For they loſt not only the Notices of the Promiſed Seed, but even of God himſelf; and dropt the plain Principles of Common Morality, as well as thoſe of Revealed Religion. Whether Idolatry, that abſurd and ſottiſh Practice, began before the Flood, is not ſo very certain; however 'tis plain that the whole Earth was covered with Debauchery and Violence, *all fleſh having corrupted their way*; whereon God reſolved to ſweep them all away at once, eight Perſons only excepted, to people it again with a better Race. But when they had ſtocked it, Wickedneſs, notwithſtanding God's *Curſe*, ſo lately and

and ſo viſibly attending it, grew very *fruitful, increaſed and multiplied* as faſt as Mankind did; And that vile Idolatry, and abominable Immorality, into the Dregs whereof they ſo ſpeedily ſunk, provoked God to abandon them in a fearful manner, as the Apoſtle excellently diſcourſes in the firſt Chapter to the *Romans*. And it was a Righteous thing in him to do it. Nor can there be any juſt Grounds to reflect on him for not ſetting on foot a new divine Revelation, which they had wilfully and carefully loſt; when beſides that, they ſo abominably ſinned againſt the Common Light of Nature and Reaſon.

§. III. However at length, in infinite Mercy, and undeſerved Compaſſion, God did once again cauſe the Heavenly Light to ſhine into one little Apartment of the Houſe of this World; whence it ſhould, and might have been

been tranſmitted and reflected into every Room thereof. For he renews the Promiſe of a *Seed in which all the Nations of the Earth ſhould be Bleſſed*, to *Abraham* and his Children, who were Conſiderable Men, and Conſiderable Travellers, and in very Great Eſteem with ſome Kings: And no doubt but theſe Holy Men were forward to inſtruct them and their Subjects in this main Point, had they been but willing to learn.

After this God brings the Children of *Abraham* out of *Egypt*, being encreaſed like the Stars of Heaven, and like thoſe in the *Galaxy*, gathered together into a Body, that ſo mingling their Lights, and ſhining with united Rays, they might be the more viſible; maintains them in the Wilderneſs, plants and preſerves them in *Canaan* by a Train of mighty Miracles, tho' he could have done it with leſs Noiſe, to awaken the Neighbour Nations

Nations to come and join with them. For when he choſe the *Iſraelites*, he was far from excluding thereby the Reſt of Mankind from the Hopes and Means of Salvation. As the Apoſtle argues concerning the *Way* of Salvation by Chriſt, ſo may we concerning the deſigned *Extent* thereof: *The Law which was Four hundred and thirty Years after*, could not, in God's Intention, *diſannul the Promiſe, that in Abraham's Seed All the* NATIONS *of the Earth ſhould be Bleſſed, ſo as to make it of no Effect. Was the Law* given the *Iſraelites* at Mount *Sinai, againſt this Promiſe? God forbid.* So far was it from this, that 'tis ſuppoſed in the Law of *Moſes*, the Heathens would turn Proſelytes, and Proviſion in that caſe was made for their Encouragement. Their Law indeed was a *Partition-Wall*; but it was ſo to keep the Jews *in*, not in *God*'s Deſign, whatever it might

Gal. 3. 17.

Eph. 2. 14.

might be in *theirs*, to keep the Gentiles *out*: And therefore in this Wall there was ſtill a *Door* kept open for their Entrance; and that no more came in, is to be aſcribed partly to the Wickedneſs of the Jew, and partly to that of the Gentile.

And *Abraham* was a Perſon of great Renown in the Eaſt, among the *Syrians* and *Chaldæans*. Several great Nations, particularly the *Saracens*, (for they themſelves ſcorn'd to be called *Hagarens*) deſcended from him, and valued themſelves upon it; and they were very formidable to the *Roman* Empire, had a vaſt one of their own in the Eaſt, and puſh'd their Conqueſts Weſtward as far as *Spain* it Self. And the *Iſraelites* were a *Conſiderable* People, eſpecially in the Days of *David*, *Solomon*, and *Hezekiah*, as appears from the *Bible*, wherein we have Records of their Affairs, and which may juſtly Challenge as much Credit

Credit with any Man, even tho' he don't believe its Divine Authority, as any other Ancient Hiſtory. The *Greeks* indeed, and the *Latins* who tranſcribed from them, take little notice of them. But moſt of them were late Authors, and very much unacquainted with thoſe Parts of the World for a long time. And tho' *Herodotus* could not ſee them, yet other Ancient * Hiſtorians that lived thereabouts did, and made mention of them. And it may be we might have found them in that *Father of Hiſtorians*, in his particular *Hiſtory of the Aſſyrians*, if we had it; which either we have loſt, or he never wrote according to his Promiſe.

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* *See them mentioned by the Biſhop of* Meaux *in his* Diſcours ſur l'Hiſtoire univerſelle, *p.* 42, 43. *It. p.* 154, 155.

The

The time would fail me if I ſhould ſpeak of the Captivities and Diſperſions of the *Jews* into the *Eaſt*, and *Egypt*, &c. that, together with them, Divine Knowledge might be ſcatter'd abroad: Or of the Tranſlation of Part, if not the Whole of the Old Teſtament by the means of *Ptolomy*; whence, as appears from *Tacitus* and *Virgil*, the World about the time of the Birth of Chriſt was *big* with Expectations of the Appearance of ſome Extraordinary Perſon for the General Good of Mankind. Only I can't but remark that Evil Spirit that reigned among the *Jews*, who tranſlated the Sacred Writings very unwillingly, and meerly out of Fear of *Ptolomy*, whom they durſt not incenſe againſt Themſelves by a flat refuſal of it: but yet they Annually kept a Mournful * *Faſt* on the Account of

* *Lightfoot*'s Harm. Vol. 1. p. 490. *Walton*'s App. Bib. Proleg. 9. §. 3.

that *Verſion*; ſo much did they envy the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind; and ſo loth were they to communicate this Treaſure to the Heathens, deſiring ſtill to have kept it lock'd up in their own Language.

I ſhall not enlarge on the Deſign and Command of our Saviour to *Diſciple all Nations*; nor of the incredible Diligence of the Apoſtles in Spreading the Goſpel, nor the Barbarous Treatment they met with. It had reach'd much further, had not Men raiſed up a *Bank* againſt it. Nor of the Fault of Chriſtians or Heathens at this day, who can Export to, and Import from the remoteſt Parts all ſorts of Commodities for a little Worldly Profit; but the one doth not endeavour to ſpread, nor the other covet that Sacred Treaſure of Divine Knowledge, that is worth infinitely more than Thouſands of Silver and Gold.

On

On the whole, 'tis evident, that Revealed Religion, as to the Substance of it, and as far as was absolutely Neceſſary, was *twice* promulgated to all the World; once to *Adam*, another time to *Noah* and his Family; and therefore *I claim* A. W's *Promiſe**, and expect that he Renounce his Deiſm, and Declare for the Goſpel: And if he be a Man of *Honour*, and value his Word as a *Gentleman*, he will publickly profeſs himſelf a *Chriſtian*. It was alſo preached to the *Iſraelites*, that from them the Sound thereof might reach other Nations. And we Chriſtians have it in the laſt and beſt Edition of it to the ſame End. And 'tis owing unto the groſs Fault and vile Wickedneſs of Men, that this Religion hath not been Univerſally diffuſed, God having provided very apt and proper *Means* in

* Page 210.

order to it. And having done ſo, he was not obliged in an Extraordinary way to ſend an Angel from Heaven with a *Bible* in his hand to every Particular Perſon; No more than the Government think themſelves obliged to ſend the Acts of Parliament to every Pariſh, or every diſtinct Houſe therein. 'Tis rationally ſuppoſed, that every one will ſo far mind their Own Concerns, whereon their Liberties, and Lives, and the Common Welfare doth depend, as to enquire them out and look after 'em themſelves. And if the Ordinary means of attaining to the Knowledge of them, be wretchedly neglected, unuſual Methods cannot reaſonably be expected.

§. V. Yet after all, if there be any Heathens whoſe Caſe is *Compaſſionable*, becauſe they want the Ordinary Means of Knowledge; and they honeſtly live

live up to the Light of Nature, they are in the hands of a Good God, who will not deal *hardly* with them, but make all the Favourable Allowances their Caſe will reaſonably admit of. And this I am ſure, they will fare much better than Mr. *G.* or *A. W.* who have the Sacred Writings, but, like Swine, trample this *Jewel* in the Dirt, and impiouſly Blaſpheme the Son of God, who is our *Saviour*, and will be their *Judge* at the laſt Day.

For 'tis in vain for this Gentleman to plead as he does, That * *if the Heathens living up to the Height of Natural Religion might be Eternally happy, I ſee no Reaſon but why we may be ſo too.* I will be very liberal in my Suppoſitions at the preſent, that *Heathens* and *Deiſts* too live up to the HEIGHT of Natural Religion;

* *Oracles of Reaſon*, p. 205.

and alſo that the *Former* may be Saved: but I will give him a Reaſon why the Latter cannot: *viz.* Becauſe through the Wickedneſs of their own Hearts they contemn and defy that Divine Revelation which was never propoſed to, and therefore could not be abuſed by, the other.

§. VI. Nor muſt he think to come off another Day, by pretending the want of *Evidence* of the Truth of Revealed Religion. For thus he argues; * *If our Happineſs depend upon our Belief, we cannot firmly believe till our Reaſon be convinced of a Supernatural Religion. And if the Reaſons of it were Evident, there could be no longer any Contention about Religion: All Men would embrace the ſame, and acquieſce in it. No Prejudice would prevail againſt the Certainty of a Future Good. 'Tis every*

* Id. p. 206.

Man's

Man's greateſt Buſineſs here to labour for his Happineſs, and conſequently none would be backward to know the Means.--- And if I cannot believe, 'tis a Sign the Evidence is not ſtrong enough to make me. And a little before, ſaith * he, *We (i. e.* We Deiſts, for I think that is the true meaning of the Paſſage, tho' it be brought in as ſpoken by an Objector; We) *ſay, that Religion is only true, which is or may be reaſonable and convincing to all Men: Now if it be not Generally held, it appears not convincing.* Hereby he hath highly obliged the *Atheiſtical Crew*, and given them an Argument to overturn the Foundations of the Deiſts Natural Religion. For they may ſay, *If the Reaſons of it were Evident, there could be no longer any Contention* about the Being of a God, or a Future State. *And if I cannot believe either of theſe,*

* Page 202.

(as ſaith the Atheiſt I cannot) *'tis a ſign the Evidence is not ſtrong enough to make me.* Nay, as a *foul Gun* recoils and wounds him that ſhoots with it, ſo doth this way of Arguing return upon our Deiſts. For there are Multitudes that do believe Natural Religion is not ſufficient for the Happineſs of Men, eſpecially of thoſe who have a Revealed one propoſed to them, but denied by 'em. 'Tis ſo evident, that this may be retorted upon themſelves, that our Author obſerves it, and makes this *modeſt* Reply to it, * That *there are but few of a Nation that ever conſider to the Bottom of a Religion*; which we muſt be ſo civil as to ſuppoſe the *Immortal* Deiſt to do. *But 'tis evident that many Men in all Religions at this day have center'd in the Opinion of Natural Religion, and its Sufficiency of* (I ſuppoſe

* P. 202, 203.

it

it ſhould be *for*) *Happineſs*. But no Chriſtian doth or can think ſo, as long as theſe Words are in the Bible, *He that believeth not ſhall be damned*; and *except ye believe that I am He, ye ſhall die in your Sins*. And Reaſon will tell us, if Scripture had been ſilent, that thoſe Men muſt periſh that prophanely treat the Son of God as an Impoſtor, and his Religion as a *Lye*.

Further, according to this way of arguing, hardly any thing can be *either True or Falſe*, whereas every thing muſt be *either one or t'other*. Let us take for an Inſtance the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*. *If the Reaſons of it were evident, there could be no longer any Contention about it. All Men would embrace it, and acquieſce in it. If it be not Generally held, it appears not convincing. If I cannot believe it,* (and all Proteſtants, the Heathens, and ſome of the Papiſts themſelves tell

tell us they can't believe it) *'tis a Sign the Evidence is not ſtrong enough to make me.* Therefore the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation is not true. And by the ſame way of arguing, I will prove it is not *Falſe neither. For if the Reaſons* againſt it *were evident, there could be no longer any Contention about it*; but all the World would preſently turn good *Roman* Catholicks in this Fundamental Point. *And if I cannot believe it* to be Falſe, ſaith the Papiſt, *'tis a Sign the Evidence is not ſtrong enough to make me.*

But the Reaſon why Men do not believe the Goſpel, is not the want of *External Evidence*, but *Internal Diſpoſition*; which latter is as neceſſary as the former. We have *Motives* ſufficient to ſway a wiſe and pious Man to embrace Chriſtianity; but God hath not given us ſuch a *glaring Evidence* of the Truth of it, as we have that *two and two make four.* If he had,

had, Aſſenting to it would be no Proof of any Man's Ingenuity, there would be nothing Praiſe-worthy in it. A *Deiſt* may be proud and conceited, mad upon his Luſts, and therefore Unwilling the Goſpel ſhould be true; he may not duly weigh the Arguments which are brought for the Confirmation of it; nor earneſtly and honeſtly pray for God's Aſſiſtance to diſcern aright; nor be true to that Light which he already enjoys; and for theſe Reaſons God in his Righteous Judgment may leave him to the Devil and Himſelf, and then he cannot believe; but for all that he ſhall Eternally periſh, and that very juſtly too, in and for his Infidelity.

And this Gentelman muſt be a great Stranger to Humane Nature and the Courſe of the World, who ſaith, *No Prejudice would prevail againſt the Certainty of a Future Good:*

'Tis

'Tis every Man's greateſt Buſineſs here to labour for his Happineſs, and conſequently none WOULD *be backward to know the means*; which the Experience of all Ages doth evidently confute. In ſhort, beſides Evidence and Argument, there is required a *pious Temper* of Soul, lying open to, and eaſily impreſſible by Divine Truths; and one of ſuch a Make would quickly cloſe with, and firmly adhere to Chriſtianity; as a prepared Soil eaſily takes in, and firmly retains ſuch a ſort of good Grain as is moſt agreeable to it.

§. VII. I would not have this Gentleman deceive himſelf with vain Hopes, drawn from *Infinite Mercy* *, *which is*, as he expreſſes it, *as 'twere God's High-Court of Equity in the Caſe, to relieve from the Extremity of the Law.*

* Page 209.

For

For the Caſe between God and Fallen Man is not as he, with the *Socinians*, repreſents * it, like that of Debtor and Creditor; but that of a notorious Rebel, and a Wiſe and Righteous Governor, (which one Obſervation will anſwer moſt, if not all the Pleas brought from Divine Goodneſs). And if a vile Traytor ſhould tear in pieces the Prince's Act of Grace, and defy him that brought it to him, inſtead of complying with the Terms of it; and then pretend to caſt himſelf on the King's Mercy without Repenting of that inſolent Abuſe of his offer'd Indulgence, but ſtubbornly perſiſt, and openly juſtify himſelf in ſo doing, tho' he do pretend to be ſorry for his *other* Crimes; no *Chancery* would relieve him, but every Man of Senſe would think it very *Equitable* that he ſhould

* Ib.

be

be executed according to the utmoſt Rigor of the Law.

§. VIII. 'Tis eaſy to apply this. And I hope our Author will, and then he will ſee Cauſe to change his Mind about the value of Repentance, and let fall his Extravagant Notion about it. For having acknowledged * that what Sir *C. Woleſly* tells us is moſt true, *That Mankind in all Ages have applied themſelves to God as guilty Offenders, and have agreed that an Expiation was neceſſary, but look'd up to him for the Revelation of it: wherefore they uſed ſeveral Sacrifices and Luſtrations, &c.* He makes this very Extraordinary Anſwer to it, *viz. Theſe ſeveral Expiations were indeed all but* Symbolical, *and referr'd to our Sorrow and Repentance; That is the true and* only Expiation *of Sin, and is ſo agreed upon*

* Page 200.

by

by all Men in all Ages, and of all Religions, wherefore take it for an Undoubted Truth. For my part, I cannot but take it for an *undoubted Falſhood*, and groſs Miſtake. I grant that they thought *Repentance* * as well as *Prayer* ought to accompany their Sacrifices. But he that ſays all their Sacrifices were only *Symbolical* of Repentance, and that it was ſo in the Senſe of all Ages, and all Religions, ſays he knows not what. 'Twas not ſo among the *Jews*. They offer'd Sacrifices to make *Atonement* for their Sins, and an *Expiation* of them; and they judged that their Sins were imputed to the Beaſt, who thereupon was killed, that by its ſuffering Puniſhment in their ſtead, they might be releaſed, and God be reconcil'd to them.

* Outram de Sacrif. p. 168.

But

But the *ſmell* of a *Jew*, eſpecially in the *Bible*, is offenſive to this Gentleman; and therefore let us go to the *Heathen* Nations, which will be more ſuitable to him. They ranſack'd the whole Earth, Air, and Water, for Oblations to their Gods. Some think *Swine* were the moſt Ancient ones. But 'tis more * likely that the *Fruits* of the Earth were ſo; Herbs and Plants † they plucked up by the Roots, and burnt them with their Leaves and Fruit. And the *Gods* fed as well as the Men; for this was before Fleſh was eaten. But when the one fared better, ſo did the t'other, *viz.* on Bulls, Oxen, Heifers, Rams, Goats, Boars, Swine, Sheep, Lambs, Dogs, Cocks, Geeſe, Pigeons, Turtles, Horſes, Tunnies,

* Owen *Exerc. on* Heb. Vol. 1. p. 310.

† Potter's *Antiq. of* Greece. p. 188.

yea,

yea, and Eels too *, if they were of the *Larger* Sort. But ſome Men were either Poorer, or elſe *better Huſbands* than ſo; and they made a *Cake*, and faſhion'd it into the likeneſs of an Ox, and ſo ſacrificed it.

Their Folly did not ſtop here, but turn'd into downright Frenzy; for they butcher'd Men, Women, and Children; their beſt Friends and neareſt Relations, and burnt them on their Altars. *Herodotus*, *Diodorus Siculus*, *Porphyry*, and *Cæſar*, &c. tell us this was a moſt Univerſal Cuſtom. Tho' at length in ſeveral Places they began to relent, and find out a Temper. For at *Rhodes* † they at laſt were contented with the Sacrificing of ſome vile Criminal only; the *Romans* ||, their Slaves;

* Id. 193, *&c.*
Lord *Herbert* de Relig. Gentil. p. 200.
† Porphyry, de Abſt. l. 2. p. 221.
|| *Servius* in Virg. p. 552.

and inſtead of that, afterwards they would lay their young Men on their Altars, and ſoundly ſcourge them, (tho' I think the *Fathers* ſhould have been in their Places); yet others would Whip them to Death *. *Diphilus* in *Cyprus* made them offer an Ox. *Amaſis* † in *Egypt* ſubſtituted three Images of Wax, in the place of three Men. At *Laodicæa*, a Stag at laſt ſupplied the room of the Virgin. *Iphicrates*, or ‖ as *Juſtin* ſaith, *Darius* aboliſh'd this Cuſtom among the *Carthaginians*, and *Adrian* almoſt throughout the whole Empire. The Alteration, and the aboliſhing of it, ſhews what was the old Cuſtom,

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* *Potter*, uti ſupra.

† Porphyry de Abſt. l. 2. p. 224, 5, 6. *See the Teſtimonies out of* Philo's *Tranſlation of* Sanconiathon. Clemens Alexandr. Dionyſ. Halicarn. *and* Diodorus Siculus. In Euſebius de Præparat. Evang. l. 4. ch. 16. Herodot. l. 2. Cæſar de bello Gall. l. 6. c. 4.

‖ Hiſt. l. 19. c. 1.

which

which did obtain universally among the *Greeks* too *; so that a late Ingenious † Author was mistaken in saying, It was hardly in use among them, or any civilized Nations. And *Philo* out of *Sanconiathon* saith, The *Phœnician* History is full of such Instances. To which may be added several Testimonies out of the Scriptures, of offering their little Ones to *Moloch*, &c.

And could all this be done only as a *Symbol* of Repentance? He must be in great want of a *Sign*, that shall hang up his Friend, or his Child at his Door for one. There can be no Shadow of Reason to move them to such a way of *signifying* their Sorrow, if that were all that was intended.

But it looks somewhat like a Rational Motive, if they had any Hope

* Porphyry uti supra.

† *Potter's* Antiq. Greece, p. 193.

hereby to expiate their Sins, and turn away the Anger of God from them; which is so Terrible an Evil, that provided it may be obtained, it can't be too dearly purchased. And the Same Authors that tell us of their Practice, tell us that this was their Principle. They knew Mankind to be the *noblest* Part of the visible Creation; and thought the more Excellent the Sacrifice was, the more likely it was to reach this end. This is evident from the Cause, and their End in offering any Sacrifices, but especially Humane Ones. They hoped the Death of the Victim should be in *lieu* of that of the Offender; and the Gods they thought would not be * appeased,

* Quòd pro vitâ hominis, nisi vita hominis reddatur, non posse Deorum immortalium numen placari arbitrantur. *Cæsar de Bello Gall. l.* 6.

Cùm inter cætera mala, etiam Peste laborarent. — Homines ut victimas immolabant, & impuberes aris admovebant, pacem eorum sanguine eorum exposcentes. *Justin. Hist. l.*18. *c.* 6.

unless

unleſs the Life of one Man went for another. This is plain alſo from the very Names they gave their * Rites and † Sacrifices, and the Manner of their offering them; which was, not only among the *Jews*, but the *Heathens* ‖ too, with Solemn Prayers to God, that all the Plagues which they or their Country had deſerved, might light on the Head of the Victim, and ſo they themſelves eſcape. And hereupon they thought that all their Sins did meet upon it, and defile it to that Degree, that none who had touched it, dared to return home till they had waſh'd and purified themſelves.

And now let the *Reader* judge, whether Sacrifices were only *Symbo-*

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* Καθαρμός. Ἁγνισμός. Expiatio. Piamentum. Piamen. Februa. Luſtratio. Purgatio.

† Περικαθάρματα. Καθάρματα. Piaculum. Ἀντίψυχα, &c.

‖ Outram de Sacrif. p. 278, *&c.*

lical of their Sorrow; and that Men never dreamt of any atoning Virtue in them: But that all Men of all Nations look'd on *Repentance* as an *Expiation*, and the *only* one too.

§. IX. I'll put an end to the *Readers* trouble, and my own, when I have obſerved the ſeveral Contradictions and groſs Blunders of our Modern Deiſts. They profeſs to believe that there is * *One* Infinite, Eternal God; and yet the *Reader* may remember that in my Epiſtle to him, I have ſhew'd him, That Mr. *G.* is for *Two* † *Gods*, the one *Good*, the other *Evil*. Mr. *B.* tells us, *The Firſt Good, who is alſo the Firſt Principle of all Beings, hath but ONE Affection or Property, and that is* ‖ *LOVE*: And yet in the

* *Oracles of Reaſon*, p. 197.
† Page 194.
‖ Page 90.

ſame

ſame Page adds, *There is nothing dreadful in the whole Nature of God, but his* JUSTICE; *no Attribute elſe being terrible.*

A. W. ſays this is one of the Chief Heads of their Religion, That *we are to expect* * *Rewards and Puniſhments hereafter, according to our Actions in this Life, which includes the Souls Immortality, and is proved by our admitting Providence.* But yet, in the ſame Letter ſee how faintly he ſpeaks, viz. *Grant that they* SEEM *reaſonable*, &c. But Mr. *B.* ſpeaks *Out* †, That the Doctrine of the *Immortality of the Soul*, was but a cunning Trick and Invention of the Politicians, who had not ſo much a *regard to* TRUTH *as Honeſty*, (a very great Inſtance of their Honeſty to invent *Uſeful Lies*), and that herein they did

* Page 197.

† Page 125.

as *Phyſicians do by their Patients*, or *Nurſes by their Children*, who tell them a fair Story, tho' never ſo falſe, that they may deceive them for their Good.

If the *Son* don't ſpeak home enough, let's hear the *Father*, who ſaith *, *We Creatures are the Momentary Apparitions of the Eternal God, which the Fates only ſhew to the Earth, and don't ſuffer to be any longer, as Images in Tapiſtry Hangings.* The whole Diſcourſe Mr. *B.* calls, *An undigeſted* † *Heap of his Father's Thoughts. And that theſe are only ſuch* * *Twilight Conjectures as our Humane Reaſon (whereof we yet ſo vainly boaſt) can furniſh us with.*----- *So that indeed all Philoſophy, excepting*

* Ideoque nos Creaturæ ſumus æterni Dei apparitiones momentaneæ, quas tantum terris oſtendunt Fata, nec ultra eſſe ſinunt, veluti effigies in Aulæis. *Diſcourſe of Sir* H. B's de Anima. *In the Oracles of Reaſon*, p. 156.

† Id. p. 154. * Id. p. 157.

Scepticiſm,

Scepticiſm, is little more than Dotage. A Cenſure true enough, tho' not ſo decent from the Mouth of Mr. *B.* A Son ſhould not uſe his Pen to let fall ſuch *Blots* on his Father's Writings and Memory. But how *vainly* indeed, to uſe his own Word, doth he boaſt of REASON, when he calls it the *Soveraign* * *Rule and Touch-ſtone, the Supreme and Primitive Director of every Man,* if it give no better a Light than this? and what Sorry *Oracles* is it like to utter?

Mr. *B.* tells us, *To be* † *ſure the Deiſt is no Idolater, none can accuſe him of Idolatry.* But the Reaſon is a very poor one, *viz.* becauſe *he acknowledges one Supream Everlaſting God, and thinks Magnificently of him.* So do the *Papiſts* as well as he, and yet Proteſtants

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* *Preface to Oracles of Reaſon,* p. 3.

† Page 91.

unan-

unanſwerably prove them guilty of Idolatry. And the Deiſt, according to his Principles, will be an Idolater, if he live in a Popiſh or a Pagan Country. For, ſaith *A. W.* * *the Learned in all Religions, in the outward Ceremonies of every Religion, are every Man of 'em content to Conform to thoſe of their own Country.* And ſeeing ſome of the Heathen Worſhip is very *filthy and obſcene*, we may gueſs at his *Sobriety and Chaſtity*, if ever he ſhould fall among 'em. But ſuppoſe it ſhould be free from *Obſcenity*; yet for a Man to join in the Worſhip of an Image or a falſe God, which he believes to be ſo, meerly becauſe 'tis the *Religion eſtabliſh'd by Law*, is Groſs ſneaking *Hypocriſy*, which a Man of *Honour* would Scorn; and thereby we may gueſs at their *Moral Vertue* which they talk ſo much of, as another of their Fundamentals.

* Page 203.

And

And seeing the Deists, as they themselves say, think so * *Magnificently* of God, and Mr. *B.* was such a zealous † Assertor of the *Glory, Honour, and Adoration of ONE GOD*, let us a little examin this. Mr. *G.* saith there can be no such thing as *a pure* ‖ *Spirit, independent of all Body and Matter*; and that they *that advance the Opinion of pure and Immaterial Substances, trust to Fancy and meer Conjectures*; and so God is a *Material* Being. And having degraded the Deity from a pure Spirit into a *Body*, he endeavours to prove there are answerable Qualities to be found in him. For, *since 'tis Evident from this* * *uncontrovertible Maxim*, Nemo dat quod

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* Ib.

† *Account of the Life and Death of Mr.* Blount, *p.* 6.

‖ Page 187.

* Page 190.

non

non habet, *that the Qualities of all things, and therefore of Body, are in God himſelf (that is, in an infinite Degree of Perfection) the moſt pure of Spirits, 'tis not likely that Body ſhould be derogatory to the Purity of infinitely inferior Spirits.* And ſo God is an infinitely hot, dull, and heavy Body; and yet at the ſame time he is Infinitely Cold, and brisk and light too. For there are Bodies to which all theſe Qualities do belong. And doth not this Man now think very MAGNIFICENTLY of his Maker?

But how bold ſoever he may be with him, he is very civil to the Female Sex, in providing *Husbands* for 'em from among the * *Angels*; tho' what he further ſaith on that Subject for two Pages † together, I ſhall not tranſcribe, becauſe I will *not ſtain my*

* Page 190.

† Page 191, 192.

Paper,

Paper, nor pollute the Mind of my Reader. And yet this wretchedly unconſtant Man quickly after tells us, That *a Woman is the moſt lovely* * *BRUTE of the Univerſe.* A Flight this is, which I hope *LINDAMOUR*, as the Writer of Mr. *Blount*'s Life and Death calls himſelf, will not forget, the next time he pays his Devotions to the *Divine Image*, as he words it, of the *Honourable* and *Divine* HERMIONE; for whom this *Deiſt*, tho' *to be ſure he is no Idolater*, has ſo great a Veneration, that he talks of *Sacrificing* † his own Life for her with his own Hands, as Mr. *B.* did for *Aſtrea*, his Brother's Wife. This *Lindamour* defends and applauds as an Heroical Action in *Philander*, with this remarkable Say-

* Page 191. *at the Bottom.*

† *Account of the Life and Death of Mr.* Blount, p. 1, 2.

ing

ing out of *Almanzor*, *I my ſelf am King of me*; tho' how this is conſiſtent with the third Fundamental of *A. W*'s Religion, viz. *That 'tis our Duty to Worſhip and Obey God as our Creator and GOVERNOR*, I leave to his Conſideration. As alſo how he will reconcile Mr. *Blount*'s Practice with theſe Words of his in his Diſcourſe againſt the Surrenderers of Charters, viz. **He that commits Murder with the Sword of Juſtice, aggravates his Crime to the* Higheſt Degree: *As theſe Gentlemen would have done in making the Government* Felo de ſe, *and Acceſſary to its own ruin.*

Tho' it be not a matter of ſo great Moment as the reſt which I have already mention'd; yet I can't but obſerve, that Mr. *B.* †accuſes Sir *H. Savil*, that he hath *ſo far Complemented the*

* Page 178.

† Page 128.

Jewiſh,

Jewiſh, *as to Rob the* Engliſh *World of the fifth Book of* Tacitus's *Hiſtory, by omitting any Part of it in his Verſion*; and yet he himſelf is guilty of the ſame Fault; and beſides the miſtranſlation of what he gives us, hath kept back a Conſiderable part of *Tacitus's* Account. But I ſuppoſe he thought, that wherever there is a *Jew*, 'tis fit there ſhould be ſomewhat of *Circumciſion*.

I'le add but one more, (tho' I could produce ſeveral others): The Deiſt ſometimes bears up very briskly about *Repentance*, *'Tis the true and only Expiation of Sin, and is ſo agreed upon by all Men, in all Ages, and of all Religions; wherefore take it for an* * *Undoubted Truth; and this not revealed, but innate, and a part of Natural Religion.* Sure by his Confidence he looks on this as *Full Payment*. And yet a

* Page 200.

little

little after, 'tis but a *little part* of *Compoſition-Money*, but 'tis all we have. *Repentance is what we can anſwer* * *to an Atonement, and therefore we may reaſonably aſſert 'tis all God will expect from us.* 'Tis but as a *Thouſand Pounds* when a Man owes a *Million*, and the *Creditor can have but All.* And as pert as Mr. *B.* is, yet ſometime his Heart fails him. For the higheſt he can go is but *Vero-ſimile eſt, ſimilem Deo à Deo* † *non negligi. 'Tis likely that he who is like God, is not neglected of God: Not to be Neglected of God*, is but a very *faint* Expreſſion. A Man may be *not neglected* of God, and yet be but in very low Circumſtances. And yet even this too is *but likely*, which is but very cold Comfort.

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* Page 209.

† Page 90.

All

All theſe *Flowers* I have gather'd out of one Garden, tho' from ſeveral Beds. The Paſſages are written, ſome by one Author, ſome by another; but we may look upon them as the *Senſe of the Party*. Mr. *Blount* hath affixed the *Seal of the Company* to all theſe Papers, and publiſh'd them all together, as *Oracles of Reaſon*. He, I am ſure, was anſwerable for them; and ſo is the Writer of his Life, who thus highly commends them, after having ſpoke very Contemptibly of other Writings as Trifles, and their Authors as *Whiffing* Scribblers. * *But the Subjects and Compoſitions of theſe following Sheets, left no room for either of theſe, i. e.* Apology or Abſtract. *Their* Merit *took away all Occaſion of Apology, and the* Majeſty *and* Conſequence *of their Deſign all pretence to Abſtracts. Thoſe that deſire to ſee*

* *Account of Mr.* Blount's *Life, p.* 2.

these Sacred MONUMENTS, *must be more nice Considerers than to be satisfy'd without attentive* OBSERVATION: *They are* TRUTHS *of too great* Importance *to be Slightly run over; of too great Beauty, not to hold our Eyes some time on them, to take a thorough* Survey *of their various Perfections.* I have look'd attentively into these MONUMENTS, and think that *Lindamour* would do well to put in for what he speaks * of, the next *Verger's* Place that falls at *Westminster*; which if he can get, he cannot then point to any Tomb, that is fuller of *Stench and Rottenness* than the Papers which in his Preface he hath so highly extolled. On the whole, I believe the Reader will incline to my Opinion, That some Men run down Christianity because 'tis *Religion*, rather than because 'tis *Revealed.*

* Ib.

FINIS.

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